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Our cover illustration shows a reconstruction of a sergeant in the Tank Corps, 1917-18; see p.15.

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## EDITORIAL

Since we have no first-time contributors to introduce this month, and space is limited, we invite our readers to join us in two minutes' silence on behalf of more than two dozen honoured friends whose death by amalgamation or disbandment was announced on the day we went to press. The process will apparently take anything up to five years in some cases; and the titles to be carried by the resultant hybrids have not been announced as yet.

### Amalgamations

The Life Guards with The Blues and Royals; The 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards with The 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards; The Queen's Own Hussars with The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars; The Royal Hussars with The 14th/20th King's Hussars; The 13th/18th Royal Hussars with The 15th/19th The King's Royal Hussars; The 16th/5th The Queen's Royal Lancers with The 17th/21st Lancers; 1st with 4th Royal Tank Regiment; 2nd with 3rd Royal Tank Regiment.

The Royal Scots with The King's Own Scottish Borderers; The Queen's Own Highlanders with The Gordon Highlanders; The Queen's Regiment with The Royal Hampshire Regiment (to form two-bn. regiment); The Royal Irish Rangers with The Ulster

Defence Regiment (to form one service bn. and several local defence bns.); The Cheshire Regiment with The Staffordshire Regiment; The Gloucestershire Regiment with The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berks. & Wilts.).

### Disbandments

One bn. of two — The Grenadier Guards, The Coldstream Guards, The Scots Guards. One bn. of three — The Queen's Regiment, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, The Royal Anglian Regiment, The Light Infantry, The Royal Greenjackets. Three bns. of five — the Gurkha Rifles.

There will be additional major amalgamations among the supporting Corps, but details are unclear.

All amalgamations and disbandments are sad; in some cases they are hard to understand. The reduction of The Queen's Regiment, covering the entire Home Counties of south-east England, to two battalions even after embracing The Royal Hampshire is baffling. The merger of the Royal Irish Rangers with the Ulster Defence Regiment is militarily inexplicable, and is an obviously political decision which we must hope has no tragic consequences.

Slow march to the cemetery; quick march home.. **MI**

## REVIEWS

**'Blitzkrieg in the West Then and Now' by Jean Paul Pallud; After the Battle, Church House, Church St., London E15 3JA; 640pp., illus. throughout; glossary, index; £39.95**

It is rare to receive for review a book about which one can honestly say, 'this could not have been done any better'. Readers familiar with the major study of the Battle of the Bulge by the same author and publisher in 1984 will know what to expect; but in selecting the complex multi-national campaign of May-June 1940 the author has taken on a herculean task. That he took five years to complete it is unsurprising; that he completed it at all, and so successfully, is astonishing. M. Pallud, and editor Winston Ramsey, deserve unstinting congratulations.

This massive book tells the story of the 45 days between 10 May and 24 June 1940 which made 'blitzkrieg' a household word, and which humbled the armies of the Western democracies. It is illustrated with more photos than this reviewer had time to count; but as there are an average of three to a page, the total must be in the region of 2,000 well-reproduced photos, and maps also support the narrative. The photos are divided between period views, and to a lesser extent the same scenes — the same roads, corners, buildings, even doorways — located and photographed during the course of M. Pallud's extraordinary research.

The 'then and now' approach should not be thought of as in any way limiting; the book stands by itself as a detailed and

very well illustrated general history of the campaign, and the present-day photos may be seen, perhaps, simply as the proof that the author has exactly located the scenes of the wartime views. Many of these latter are previously unpublished, many lacked any useful caption information originally, and most are of interest — some, very great interest.

Every aspect of the Blitzkrieg is addressed, from the first airborne assaults in Holland to the Italian attack in the Alps. About a third of the length is devoted to events after the BEF's evacuation of Dunkirk — a useful corrective to many British histories. There is no space here for any more detailed list of the contents; they appear remarkably comprehensive. Special mention should be given to the admirable index, 25pp long, with more than 400 lines per page.

The high price should not deter any serious student of World War II; this is an essential reference, and given the massive task of typesetting and design, let alone the sheer size and print quality of the volume, £40 is relatively modest. Very highly recommended. **MCW**



*This handsome grey cloth cap of an officer in the Norfolk Rifle Volunteers, made in the American style, with three bands of red/silver/black braid and a white metal bugle badge, achieved £320 at Wallis & Wallis.*

## THE AUCTION SCENE

There can be no doubt that the auction business is an unpredictable one. There are so many factors which can affect it that it is almost impossible to predict the outcome of any sale: it is just as difficult to explain why one sale succeeds as why another fails. In June there were two sporting gun sales — one in London by Christie's, and one in Geneva by Sotheby's. The first was by all accounts a resounding success, whereas the second was apparently far less successful. Why the different outcome? Was it the location? The lots offered were of similar quality, and both had some very good material. Despite all the soul-searching and analysis by the experts there seems to be no answer beyond the obvious one, that at the moment the market is variable — glib, but hardly helpful.

During the month of July both rooms are holding sales of arms and armour. Both have good material, with Christie's offering some extremely fine armour while Sotheby's have assembled a good mixture of firearms and edged weapons, including a collection of blunderbusses. Wallis & Wallis and Weller & Dufty both have sales planned, and Glendinning are holding two medal sales including one fine collection of medals all presented to the Black Watch. Sotheby's also have a sale of medals following on from the arms and armour sale. It promises to be full and varied month, and one which should give some indication of what is happening to the arms and armour market.

June sales opened with one of varied militaria at Wallis & Wallis, and as always there were some interesting prices. The rising trend in Indian Army badges continues — indeed, the interest is not limited to badges, for a brass drum of the 1st Punjab Regiment (made in Chicago!) sold for £400. The Glengarry badge of the Scots Company of the Bombay Volunteers sold for an amazing £285.

There was a small collection of cloth insignia of the sort which, not so long ago, were dismissed as typical junk box items, and would hardly have been deemed auction material. Today they are collected by many enthusiasts, and in various lots sold at prices which ranged from £20 to £130. Lots of British army cap badges were averaging out at about £3-4 a badge; and this can be contrasted with an officer's cast silver badge of the 1st Battalion Calcutta Rifle Volunteers which sold for £120.

Headdress continues to sell well, especially if of a not too common unit; a Wolsey tropical helmet of an officer of Scots Fusiliers made £225

and one of the East India Railway Volunteer Rifles sold for £240. An officer's shako of the Norfolk Volunteers sold for £320.

Gulf War material is beginning to appear in sales, although the item offered in this auction was being sold for charity and it is difficult to judge how much this affected the price. The lot was made up of a camouflage hat, jacket and trousers which sold for £65.

Third Reich edged weapons still command good prices with the SS near the top — a 1933 model SS dagger sold for £459, and an officer's 1936 model went for an astonishing £1,100. However, at the top of the list was a Postal Protection Force dagger which sold at £1,300. One is reminded of a quote from the *Selling Hitler* series on BBC television: 'Swastikas sell'. In the arms and armour section the prize lot was a flintlock brass-barrelled blunderbuss by Theophilus Richards, in fine condition, which sold for £1,450. These weapons are always popular and it will be interesting to see how the collection offered by Sotheby's do: will the quantity affect the prices?

Eastern weapons still do not fetch the prices that might be expected, and Asiatic weapons do not attract collectors which is, in many ways, rather surprising, for the quality is often so good. There were some fine items in this sale, including a rather pleasing Persian *kard* with a watered blade which sold for £425. The exception to the generalisation is, of course, Japanese edged weapons, which always sell well; this sale included several *katana* which all sold at figures ranging from £600 upwards.

Weller & Dufty had a two-day sale which clashed with that of Wallis & Wallis — which presumably does neither firm any good, for some dealers must have to make a choice as to which they will attend. Among the 1675 lots there were some most interesting pieces from a wide range of material. A German Mauser 'zig-zag' revolver sold for £1,150, and a cased double-barrelled flintlock pistol by W. Mills went for only £500. A cased pair of flintlock pocket pistols by Smith of London reached £470, and a Harvey's patent hammerless six-shot percussion revolver sold for £520. In the modern section a silenced Webley .32 self-loading pistol, possibly for SOE use in World War II, made £490; and a pressed mass-produced Liberator .45 single-shot pistol of the same period sold for £150.

It is interesting to wonder why these two houses do not offer estimates in their catalogues. If a bidder telephones they will gladly be given guidance as to the likely price, but they do not print estimates. No doubt the rooms have their reasons; but on the whole collectors find the estimates of use, even though it is understood that they are by no means definitive.

**Frederick Wilkinson**



## Video Releases to Buy:

- 'Eva Braun — Hitler's Mistress' (Castle Vision)
- 'Hitler's War' (Castle Vision)
- 'Kamikaze — To Die for the Emperor' (Castle Vision)
- 'Tank Battles — El Alamein to the Volga' (Castle Vision)
- 'Desert War — The Battle for North Africa' (DD Distribution)
- 'Wings Over the World' (DD Distribution)

Eva Braun was Hitler's mistress of some fourteen years prior to their marriage in the Berlin bunker hours before their suicide. It was in 1929, while employed as an assistant to Heinrich Hoffmann, then official photographer for the Nazi party, that she first met Hitler: within two years she was to be his mistress. She evidently had negligible influence in the politics of the Third Reich: her interests lay more in sport, fashion, romantic films, dancing and cine-photography. Fortunately for historians, much of the colour film she shot has survived, and *Eva Braun — Hitler's Mistress* consists of a fifty-minute compilation. Much of it was shot between 1939 and 1945 at the Berghof, Hitler's mountain retreat near Berchtesgaden in Bavaria, which became a second seat of government. Although for much of this time their relationship was not officially recognised, the nature of her employment made it natural for her to be constantly at Hitler's side, and by 1939 she was effectively the Berghof's unofficial hostess. This fascinating footage thus forms a unique record of the Nazi lead-

ership. We see Hitler visiting his old primary school, and visits by Party Secretary Martin Borman, Minister of Armaments Albert Speer, Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, and head of the SS Heinrich Himmler. Also seen is Reinhard Heydrich, then head of the SD security services and later to be assassinated in Prague while Reichsprotector of Czechoslovakia. Some of the footage is also shot at the mountain-top tea house which became known as the 'Eagle's Nest', and more from the Reichs Chancellery in Berlin of the motorcade marking Hitler's triumphant return from Paris.

Some of Eva's footage also appears in *Hitler's War*, a two-part documentary which deals with the Second World War in Europe from 1940. The programme considers the war from Hitler's point-of-view, giving consideration to the dilemmas with which he was faced, and his abilities as a military leader. Due weight is given to the campaigns on the Eastern Front, represented by a considerable amount of footage which has been unavailable in the West for many years. However, with a commentary written by the controversial historian David Irving, and Wagner on the soundtrack, the programme at times comes dangerously close to one its subject might have approved of.

*Tank Battles — El Alamein to the Volga* considers some of the major tank

engagements of the Second World War. The fighting in North Africa is represented by the Battle of Sidi Barrani, in which the British Matilda tanks proved to be superior to their Italian counterparts, and El Alamein, in which the outnumbered Afrika Korps was forced to retreat before the Eighth Army's well-prepared onslaught. The Eastern Front is represented primarily by Operation 'Citadel', the great battle of Kursk in which a classic pincer movement by the German Ninth Army and Fourth Tank Army failed to crush the Russian salient. Some of the footage used to illustrate the Russian counterattack at Orel, involving some 1,500 tanks, is quite remarkable.

*Kamikaze — To Die For the Emperor* deals with the desperate attempt to stem the American advance on mainland Japan by those Japanese willing (or unwilling) to sacrifice their lives for their country and emperor. This included the use of human bombs, bullets and torpedoes as well as the 'Black Edged Cherry Blossom' suicide pilots. The available footage concentrates on the last: Japanese film shows their training, while some of the American footage contains scenes of the sky filled with tracer and airbursts, and planes crashing onto ships or into the sea. The programme is entirely in black and white — a pity, as a considerable amount of the American footage was originally shot in colour.

The above tapes are all recent addi-

tions to Castle Vision's *War File* series, and are narrated by actor Patrick Allen. DD Distribution have added to their *A World at War* series *Desert War — the Battle for North Africa*. This consists of two episodes from the *Big Picture* series, which was compiled using footage taken by the United States Army Signal Corps. The first half climaxes with the battle of El Alamein, while the second half deals with the Allied landings at Casablanca, Oran and Algiers, the battles of Mareth and the Kasserine Pass, and the eventual ejection of the Axis forces from North Africa.

The *Big Picture* series was broadcast on American television between 1951 and 1964 and was arguably the most widely screened public service programme in American television history. Documentaries of this vintage are, of course, not old enough to be considered wartime propaganda, and not recent enough to benefit from modern research or film discovered in the last quarter-century: the sleeve inexcusably gives no indication of the age of the production. Readers should note that this programme was previously released by DD Distribution under the title *The Battle for North Africa, Parts I and II*.

Each programme in DD Distribution's *Wings Over the World* series deals with a particular aircraft manufacturer: four new releases are *The Lockheed Legend*; *Fokker — A Dream Fulfilled*; *In Defence of Neutrality* (Swedish aviation); and *Legacy of a Legend Builder* (Roy Chadwick and Avro aircraft). The series is well researched, and features a narration by actor Richard Todd.

Stephen J. Greenhill.

## ON THE SCREEN

## LETTERS

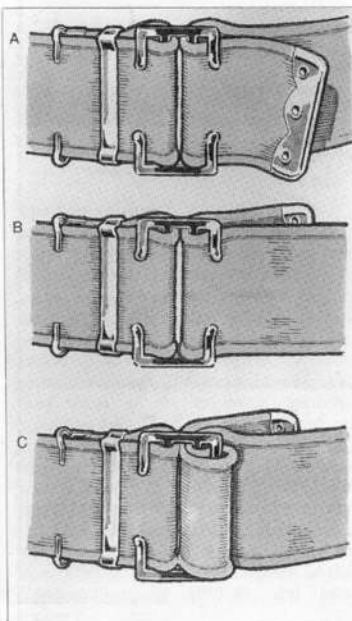
### Pattern 1908 belt

Much as I too deplore the way that 'experts' on film and TV almost invariably manage to dress their actors incorrectly, I regret to say that Mr. Maddock (Letters, *MI* No.38) is wrong. From the dozens of photographs in the archive of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Museum it is obvious that there were at least

three recognised methods of fastening the '08 pattern belt (illustrated in Paul Hannon's accompanying sketches). Most pre-1914 and Great War photographs, including formal groups of platoons in fighting order, show method (A), though method (C) — Mr. Maddock's version — is occasionally seen. After the war, when smartness tended to take over from practicality, the neater method (B) appears the most common, though (C) is still encountered. Considerable personal discretion must have been tolerated, not only within the army but indeed within battalions; and the only rule seems to have been that all members of the same group were dressed alike.

I too have worn '08 equipment, as a cadet in the OTC in 1944. We invariably used method (C); but I can remember talking to an old soldier who said that on the line of march in hot weather they would be encouraged to unbuckle their belts and open their jackets. This, he said, would have been difficult to do had their belts been as securely fastened as ours were.

Major W.H. White  
Regimental Museum DCLI  
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# The British Tank Crew's War, 1916-18



MARTIN PEGLER Paintings by PAUL HANNON

Coverage of the Gulf War has made most readers and viewers familiar with the great sophistication and extraordinary capabilities of modern battle tanks. Against this background, the experience of the very first tank crews is even more striking. In 1987 the writer was fortunate enough to 'be volunteered' to act as gearsman in the Mk IV Male tank being taken from

Bovington Camp, home of the Royal Armoured Corps and its Tank Museum, for display at the Aldershot Military Technology Show. As a result of this enlightening and bruising experience his admiration for the stamina of those first crews has increased beyond all bounds; many of the comments that follow are based on painful first-hand knowledge.

## INSIDE THE TANK

At first sight, a Mk IV Male viewed from the exterior appears gargantuan, being as high as a tall man can reach, and as wide as a bus. However, once you have clambered inside, the interior seems disproportionately small, and appears to have been designed around a special breed of midget. One's credulity is further strained when, having successfully negotiated the narrow, awkwardly placed sponson door, one attempts to stand upright — an act that gives a forceful reminder of the very low roof and the solid properties of armour plate.

The gloomy interior is dominated by the massive 105hp six-cylinder Daimler engine squatting like a malevolent animal in the centre of the vehicle, surrounded by a weblike net-

work of exhaust, water and fuel lines. The clutch and primary drive behind it effectively bisect the tank, and every inch of wall and floor space is occupied by shell racks and cupboards. Comfort for crew members is purely incidental. Two solid and uncomfortable bucket seats are placed at the front of the tank for the driver and commander. The gearsman perch on a narrow plank at the rear of the sponsons, from where they can reach the pairs of secondary gear levers. Most of the space in the sponson is already occupied by the breeches of the 6-pounder gun and machine guns. Lighting is by dynamo through half a dozen dim bulbs, which are extinguished when in action. A narrow gangway runs either side of the engine around which the crew per-

form an awkward ballet, barking shins, scraping knuckles and, in moments of forgetfulness, cracking skulls.

Starting up is an art in itself. In the Mk I the fuel was gravity-fed from tanks in each of the front 'horns'. In the case of a direct hit, this more or less guaranteed that the driver, commander and most of the crew would be immolated by the high-octane aviation spirit. In the Mk IV the 70 gallon tank was armour-plated and moved to the rear, with an Autovac suction system (that frequently didn't) for the fuel feed. With cylinders primed, mag retarded and petrol pumped through, a crank handle the thickness of a man's wrist is turned. This is located behind the engine block, where there was just sufficient room for three of us,

sweating and straining, to crank for all we were worth. In terms of sheer effort, it felt like trying to wind up an ocean liner. With a splutter the engine fired — and died. The whole laborious procedure was then repeated. It could be dangerous, as Frank Mitchell recalled:<sup>(1)</sup>

'The cranking handle was turned by the united efforts of three or four men who handled it very cautiously, for when the engine backfired the handle swung back with great force. It once happened that a man straining on the handle slipped and fell face downwards on the gearbox. The engine backfired at that moment and the heavy handle struck him on the back of the neck and killed him.'

After more hernia-inducing straining, the engine rumbled into life. The sound is absolute-



**Left:**

A photograph taken in winter 1916, showing two Mk I Female tanks; the Vickers guns have been dismantled from the sponsons, presumably for maintenance. A crewman can be seen in the top hatch of the nearest; and note particularly the very small hatches in the lower rear face of the sponsons, which made emergency escapes from these tanks dangerously difficult. (Unless otherwise credited, all photographs are courtesy of The Tank Museum, Bovington Camp, Dorset)

**Right:**

The preserved Mk IV Male tank Excellent in which the author briefly served as a temporary gearsman; this photograph clearly shows the driver's and commander's vision hatches, the central ball MG mount, the short 6-pdr. gun, and numerous pistol loop-holes for close defence.



ly paralysing; imagine half a dozen steam hammers in a steel box, and you are half way there. In addition, the stink of the exhaust mingles with the heady aroma of fuel, hot oil and sweat. Shouted conversation, even from a distance of inches, is impossible. We took up our stations, and the driver signalled with his finger for first (low) gear.

Steering demands considerable skill on the part of the driver, who must control clutch, brakes and throttle, all working through a two-speed gearbox, worm drive, differential, secondary gearbox, output shafts and chain final drive. It took four men to steer the tank. Turning involved locking the differential, putting one track into neutral and applying the handbrake to it, then allowing the vehicle to rotate around the locked track. This required smooth synchronisation on the part of the commander, driver and gearsman. We managed it in a series of kangaroo hops accompanied by much inexpert graunching of gears.

As the tank lurched forward and we grabbed for handholds, every ripple in the ground could be felt through the 26 unsprung track rollers. Gradually the light became hazy as grey fumes filled the interior. With streaming eyes and burn-

ing throats we hung out of the sponson doors for fresh air. After 15 minutes the heat of the engine and coolant had turned the interior into an oven — and it was a cool day. Working temperatures on a summer's day could reach 120°F (45°C), with heat exhaustion, dehydration and vomiting the usual side effects. As the nose of the vehicle climbed the ramps onto the transporter we were flung backwards. (It was at this point, as we frantically clutched at handholds, that one realised that everything inside the tank is hot, sharp or both.) Mitchell recalls how his driver tackled his first trench crossing:<sup>(2)</sup>

'Suddenly the nose of the tank tilted forward... with a terrific bump the heavy snout hit

the ground. One of the gearsman in the rear, taken unawares, was hurled clean out of the sponson door. The others clung wildly to anything within reach, their feet sliding and scraping on the steel floor. Grease drums, oil cans and stray tools shot forward in a clattering mass, landing on the driver's back and spraying him with oil.'

In 'our' Mk IV the final drive chains were at least enclosed — in the earlier Marks they were not, and would spray the inside with liquid mud until it was inches deep, adding to the overwhelming impression of being in a greasy slow cooker. As we climbed the low-loader ramp our engine stalled, and we struggled against gravity to

insert the dislodged crank handle and restart the engine. With all the hatches open, the tank looked from the outside as though it was on fire, with exhaust fumes streaming from every orifice. Eventually, safely loaded, we wearily levered ourselves out of the cramped cabin, red-eyed and coughing. We had been inside for a little over an hour. No-one was trying to kill us; the tank was unstowed; the ground had been basically level; and the interesting cocktail of fumes inside didn't include the throat-parching stink of cordite, or the smell of blood. We congratulated Driver Fletcher, slumped blinking and sweating over the controls, on the neatness of his manoeuvring of the tank onto the trans-



Excellent from three-quarter rear; note sponson door, small rear access hatch, armoured fuel tank below this, and a crew member gasping for air in the top hatch as the tank filled with exhaust fumes.



port, and asked when he had learned to handle a Mk IV? 'Just now', he sighed.

## TANK CORPS ORGANISATION AND TRAINING

In Easter week 1916 two companies denominated Heavy Section, Machine Gun Corps, and lettered K and L, had been formed at Bisley Camp. Many men were recruited from the Motor Machine Gun Corps, primarily because of their combination of mechanical knowledge and machine gun competency. Initially there were no tanks actually available for training. Instead, fledgling crews were issued with dummies comprising a canvas box with small slits cut into it for visibility, and carried on a wooden framework by six men. Major W. Watson witnessed the effect on the local populace:<sup>(1)</sup>

'We started with a crew of officers to encourage the men, and the first dummy tank waddled out of the gate. It was immediately surrounded by a mob of cheering children who thought it was an imitation dragon or something out of a circus. It was led away from the road to avoid hurting the feelings of the crew and to safeguard the ears and the morals of the young. After colliding with the corner of a house, it walked down the side of the railway cutting.'

A large number of officers were drawn from the Public Schools Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers (18th, 19th, 21st) and they represented a very high standard of command. Many others volunteered from the Regiments and Corps, and this nucleus was formed into six companies (A to F) each composed of four sections of six tanks each — three 6-pdr.-armed Males and three Vickers-armed Females — with one reserve tank. A crew consisted of an officer, usually a subaltern, an NCO and six ORs. All crewmen were trained to function in any required capacity, so a driver could double as a gunner and vice versa. A company was commanded by a major, and a section by a captain. Each pair of companies had a Quartermaster and work-

shop attached, which comprised three officers and 30 men.

Naming of tanks was a commonplace occurrence, and initially each company shared a common theme. 'A' Company had vehicles named after popular London theatre shows of the day, such as *Oh, I Say, Look Who's Here* and *We're All In It*. With the formation of the Tank Corps the companies (or battalions, as they subsequently became) adopted a policy of naming their vehicles after the battalion letter, thus F Battalion had tanks named *Flirt*, *Fiara*, *Fray Bentos*, etc.

The Heavy Section soon transferred to Lord Iveagh's estate in Thetford, Norfolk, where a number of Mk Is joined them, in the guise of 'water tanks for despatch to Russia'. Towards the end of the year the training centre was transferred to Bovington, near Wool in Dorset, in conditions of utmost secrecy: inhabitants of the route were told to draw their curtains, and Military Police were placed to ensure that they did. This continued for some time, until a farmer sauntered into the HQ and informed the startled officers that he had had a broken tank in his yard for the last two days, and would the Army like it back?

Training had now begun in earnest, and included mechanics, law, administration, topography, first aid, sanitation, bombing, gas, the SMLE rifle, Hotchkiss, Lewis and Vickers guns, 6-pounders, signalling, PT and bayonet fighting. (There was considerable debate over the practical use of the bayonet in a tank). Even so, the first crews who left for France in August 1916 were neither fully trained nor properly equipped, most of the drivers having had no more than two hours actual driving experience. By September, A, B, C and D Companies were in France; E and F remained to form the nucleus of the new Corps the following year. (By 1918, there were 18 battalions in France and seven more in England.) Prior to the first tank attack at Flers on 15 September 1916 the army, with muddled logic, pro-

### Paul Hanon's reconstructions opposite show:

**(1) Private, A Company, Heavy Section Machine Gun Corps, 1916.** In a typical state of undress, this soldier wears a grey-blue issue shirt with its distinctive blue and white striped cotton neckband closed with a small tinplate button. His improvised shorts are made from a pair of service dress trousers, a widespread practice in the warmth of summer and clearly desirable inside a tank. This sensible but wasteful habit quickly brought down wrath from above, though with what effect it is hard to be sure: GRO 1850 of 5/10/16 stated that 'certain units have been in the habit of wearing shorts as part of the recognised SD uniform and that the trousers issued to the men have been cut down for the purpose. This practice is to cease.' Also occasionally seen were khaki drill shorts as normally worn in tropical climates. Whether these were issued, or merely retained by individuals from service on other fronts, is not known. He wears puttees wrapped around bare legs, and black ankle boots, and is holding the early leather tank helmet.

**(2) Lieutenant, J Battalion (later, 10th Bn.) Heavy Section Machine Gun Corps, 1917.** He wears a battered SD tunic with brown leather buttons and MGC collar dogs. The bronze 'pips' of his rank are pinned through the battalion's red/white tallies on the shoulder straps, and he wears the tank badge on his right sleeve; officers' tallies and tank badges were often of superior materials. The holster and pouch from his Sam Browne set are worn here on a 1914 pattern waist belt. The 'splash mask' is pushed back from his forehead. His shorts are cut down from officer's 'slacks', i.e. straight-leg trousers usually made with turn-ups; and puttees are worn over khaki hose-top socks. Note the 1917 small box respirator.

**(3) Private, 8th Bn., Tank Corps, 1918.** He wears his khaki serge tunic over the brown tank overall;

red and dark blue battalion tallies are sewn round the base of the shoulder straps (Haswell Miller shows a circular flash halved red — left — and dark blue on the right side of the steel helmet). At the top of each sleeve is the embroidered 'T.C.' title, and on the right sleeve the tank badge. His khaki serge trench cap bears the Tank Corps badge. He carries a Mk.1 steel helmet, and has his respirator in the 'alert' position. On the subject of helmets: Driver A.W. Bacon's recollections of the battle of Amiens include the remark, 'I clambered up and fitted myself into the driving seat, and then fixed my gas mask at the alert and hung my steel helmet on the handle of one of the loop-hole plates (we never wore tin hats inside the bus).' Secondly, the artist has been unable to find any primary pictorial evidence for the use in the field of the helmet with mail face mask attached to the rim, found in secondary sources and in collections today; nor for the blue-painted D Bn. helmet shown by Haswell Miller.

This soldier is shown wearing a late-war boot intended for tank and transport personnel, a version of the standard infantry boot but with twisted rope soles. It is taken from a contemporary source on footwear manufacture, but it is uncertain how widely it was used.

**(Details)** The embroidered 'T.C.' title of the Tank Corps in white worsted on khaki, originally intended as a shoulder strap slip-on but displaced to the sleeve by the coloured battalion tallies. (GRO 2137 of 13/2/17 stated that 'The worsted titles now being issued and which at present are worn on the shoulder strap will in future be worn on the sleeve just below the point of the shoulder. The alteration to existing jackets is to be carried out under regimental arrangements.') The tank badge of a qualified soldier is shown in its correct Great War design. GRO 2291 of 7/5/17 stated that although supplies of special emblems — tank badge and separate letter H for MGC titles — had not been received, indents were to be made and issues would be made when possible.

duced a batch of ASC lorry drivers to drive the tanks. As none had even seen a tank before the crews quite reasonably refused point blank to let them within spitting distance. An exchange of heated high-level telephone calls resulted in the ASC men being returned to their units. No attempt was ever subsequently made to use non-Tank Corps personnel.

## ARMAMENT

Only by reason of their armament were the tanks divided into two types, Male and Female. In theory, Males dealt with emplacements and Females with infantry. Both Mk I Males and Females possessed

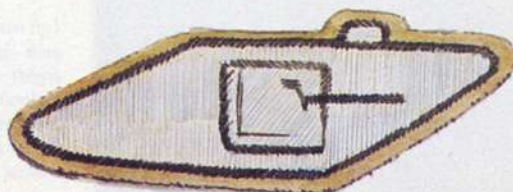
large sponsons, the Mk I Male carrying a long Hotchkiss 6-pdr. quick firing gun and a Hotchkiss machine gun in each. Females boasted pairs of armoured Vickers guns on each side. The quick fire Hotchkiss 6-pdr. guns were technically on loan from the Navy, and in skilled hands were very accurate. It was a falling block weapon, with sighting by means of a low power telescopic sight with 20° field of sight radius. Facilities for on-shore training with the 6-pdr. were limited, so the Navy provided training and classification classes at Whale Island off Portsmouth. Qualified gunlayers earned an extra 3d (1½p)



3

2

1







*Looking forwards from the rear of the right hand sponson. The Hotchkiss gunner obligingly models the leather helmet/splash mask combination and issue tan overalls. Beyond him is the 6-pdr. gunner, and in the background the commander and driver are silhouetted by the vision hatches.*

per day on top of their 1s 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d (7p) pay. It required a careful eye and steady hand to hit anything from the undulating confines of a tank, but gunners achieved remarkable feats of accuracy. In an attack on the two-storey Maison du Hibour concrete position in July 1917 by G Battalion, Lt. Baker's 6-pdr. gunner, Philips, firing from *Gorgonzola II*, managed to place two shells through the aperture of the blockhouse from a distance in excess of 200 yards. The Germans, apparently faced with an armoured version of Wild Bill Hickok, wisely fled.

Initially the barrel length of the 6-pdr. was a problem, as it would foul the sides of deep shell-holes or catch on wire, and was unwieldy in trench fighting. Despite dire warnings from the Naval Gunnery School, tank workshops lopped around 16in. (400mm) from its length; gunners swore that it improved accuracy, and it certainly aided the handling characteristics. The short 6-pdr. weighed 6cwt (305kg) and fired high explosive or case shot. Armour-piercing was frequently used; although it was incapable of piercing the frontal protection of a concrete position, a round could penetrate the thinner rear entrance. Initially, the Mk I Female's four Vickers guns were covered with protective armoured jackets. Although it was a very reliable weapon, the Vickers' water jacket was simply too vulnerable to enemy fire, and the Hotchkiss, a solidly built, clipped and near indestructible air-cooled machine gun was the preferred replacement. However, in May 1917 a request by Tank Corps HQ for Hotchkiss

guns was refused by the Military Committee, who deemed the Lewis gun perfectly adequate. It was not. Apart from a bewildering number of stoppages, it would overheat if not used with care, and its wide alloy jacket was a serious weakness, as Richard Haigh pointed out:<sup>(4)</sup>

'One of the gunners lay quite still on the floor of the tank, his back against the engine, a stream of blood trickling down his face. The Corporal next to him pointed to the Lewis sights in the turret and then to his forehead and I realised a bullet must have slipped in... as he looked along the barrel of the gun.'

It was not until 1918 and the introduction of the Mk V tank that Hotchkiss machine guns became standard equipment.

For personal defence crews were issued with a .455 service revolver, either Webley, Colt or Smith and Wesson. Numerous pistol loopholes were placed in blind spots on the tank, and in close fighting were frequently used to repel boarders. At Cambrai Cpl. Stillwell of B Battalion fought off enemy attacks on his ditched tank for over an hour by using his revolver from the loopholes, winning a well-deserved Military Medal in the process.

Personal comforts were few. Most commanders would find room for a jar or two of rum or a bottle of scotch. Two days' rations and personal kit in a small haversack would be carried, with carrier pigeons — usually half asphyxiated — in a basket placed anywhere room could be found. The attitude of at least one tank commander to this space-consuming aviary can be judged from the message attached to a dazed bird received at an anxious headquarters during the Cambrai battle. It read 'I am sick to death of carrying this bloody bird around'.

In addition to rations, fuel, water, oil, grease and tools, a Male tank carried 204 rounds of shell and case shot and 5,600 rounds of small arms ammunition. Females carried 13,000 rounds of SAA, although up to 30,000 are known to have been loaded on individual tanks.



*Left hand sponson crew of a Mk IV, with Hotchkiss (left) and 6-pdr. (right) gunners cramped together under the low roof; with the 6-pdr. at full forward (right) traverse they would be virtually sitting on one another.*



Looking forwards from the rear of the left hand sponson, across the gun breeches; the circular aperture on top of the 6-pdr. immediately above the pistol grip housed the telescopic sight. To the right can be seen the engine and the vertical exhaust pipes running up through the roof. The narrowness of the space between engine and guns can be appreciated; to get the full flavour of what action was like for the gunners one must add in imagination darkness, nauseating fumes from the exhaust and cordite, disorienting levels of noise, heat rising to 120°F; violent pitching and rolling transmitted through unsprung track rollers, and the effect of enemy fire.

## PROTECTION AND ESCAPE

The primary weapon was, of course, the tank itself, so some distinction ought to be made between the two most common early battle variants, the Mk I and Mk IV. As full technical details appear at the end of this article, these distinctions will be limited to the differences in practical terms for the crews who fought in them.

The most radical change immediately visible between the two types was the deletion of the rear sprung trailing wheels on the Mk IV after, it is said, a crew in action in a Mk I had them shot away by a shell without noticing any ill effects. The Mk II was an unarmoured training vehicle, not intended for a fighting role. The Mk III never reached production, being superseded by the better-armoured Mk IV in 1917.

The life expectancy of a crew was determined by two factors: the protection afforded by the surrounding plate, and the ease with which they could make their escape in the event of being hit. The problems of petrol storage and fire risk have already been touched upon; death by burning was the commonest end met by crews when the fume-laden tanks ignited. The armour plate — crude by today's standards — was cut and drilled as soft, then hardened by heat process. High temperature electric welding was not available, so all plates were riveted in place. In Mk I the frontal plates were 12mm thick, sides and back 10mm and roof and belly 6mm. Subsequent to the capture of 'soft-skinned' Mk II training tanks at Arras, the Germans began issu-

ing 7.92mm 'K' armour-piercing ammunition to their front line troops on the basis of one belt per machine gun and two five-round clips to infantrymen. These captured tanks, unarmoured training models, deceived the Germans over the efficiency of the plate; nevertheless, the side armour was thickened to 12mm on later Mk IVs, which close range armour-piercing rounds could still penetrate. By late 1917 the luckless Germany infantryman had also been issued with a 13mm anti-tank rifle — a 5 ft. 6 in. (1677mm) long dinosaur version of the Gew98 infantry rifle. It fired a bullet the size of a modern .50 calibre round (itself a direct descendant of the 13mm cartridge) and was universally unpopular, mainly due to a recoil that left the firer dazed and gibbering. The cartridge was certainly efficient, and in 1918 production had been started on a 13mm MG08 pattern 'TUF' machine gun, but fortunately for the tanks the war ceased before it could be issued.

Tanks had no defence against artillery, a fact forcefully illustrated at Cambrai when a three gun battery (eventually whittled down to one gun and an

*The commander's and driver's seats of the Mk IV, the rear of the former removed here to show left and right track brake levers; note central ball-mounted Lewis gun with D-handle fitted for rapid manipulation.*



### Specifications

	Mk I	Mk IV
<b>Dimensions:</b>		
Length	32ft. 6in. with tail	26ft. 5in.
Height	8ft. 2in.	8ft. 2in.
Width including sponsons	13ft. 9in. Male	12ft. 10in. Male
	14ft. 5in. Female	10ft. 6in. Female
Battle weight	28 tons Male, 27 tons Female	
Power:	Daimler 6 cylinder in-line engine developing 105bhp @ 1000rpm and maximum speed of 3.8mph.	
Fuel:	High octane aviation spirit 50 gallons	70 gallons
Consumption:	2 mpg	2 mpg
Armament:	Male: 2 x 6-pdr. 40 cal. Hotchkiss Q.F. guns & 3 Hotchkiss .303 machine guns. Female: 4 Vickers .303 machine guns, 2 Hotchkiss machine guns.	Male: 2 x 6-pdr. 23 cal. Hotchkiss Q.F. guns & 4 Lewis .303 machine guns. Female: 5 Lewis .303 machine guns.
Armour:	Front: 12mm Back and side: 10mm Roof and belly: 6mm	As for Mk I
Special features:	Early models fitted with anti-grenade netting and rear trailing wheels.	Fitted with top rails to mount fascines or unditching beam.







**Front cover:** Sergeant, Tank Corps, 1917-18. He wears the soft service dress cap with brass Tank Corps badge. The original service tunic bears the 'T.C.' title on the sleeve rather than the shoulder strap, which displays a multi-coloured battalion tally. Red and light blue should indicate 5th Bn., late E Coy.; the outer brown strip is unexplained. Between the white embroidered emblem of the trained Tank Corps soldier and the badges of rank are pinned the crossed hammer and pincers of a farrier's trade.

**(A) Major, 6th Bn., late F Coy., 1918.** This original tunic is in notably clean condition, and the cap

badge is gilt rather than bronze, suggesting that this is a 'best' rather than active service uniform. Note battalion shoulder tally and rank badge; and the finely made lanyard in battalion colours passing from the left shoulder to the left breast pocket.

**(B) Tank crewman in vehicle overall, 1917-18.** Of one-piece construction in tan brown cotton, with a full-length buttoning front, it was made loose to be worn over khaki service dress, but in action was normally worn over underwear and shirt.

**(C) Detail of the stitched and rivetted construction of the early leather tank crew helmet, shaped like a medieval sallet.**





# **Tank Corps shoulder tally colours, 1918**

'A' Coy, later 'A' Bn, later 1 Bn — red  
'B' Coy, later 'A' Bn, later 2 Bn — yellow  
'C' Coy, later 'A' Bn, later 3 Bn — green  
'D' Coy, later 'A' Bn, later 4 Bn — light blue  
'E' Coy, later 'A' Bn, later 5 Bn — red/light blue  
'F' Coy, later 'A' Bn, later 6 Bn — red/yellow  
'G' Bn, later 7 Bn — red/green  
'H' Bn, later 8 Bn — red/dark blue  
'I' Bn, later 9 Bn — red/brown  
'J' Bn, later 10 Bn — red/white  
'K' Bn, later 11 Bn — red/black  
'L' Bn, later 12 Bn — red/purple  
13 Bn — green/black  
14 Bn — green/purple  
15 Bn — green/yellow  
16 Bn — black/yellow/black  
17 Bn — green/white  
18 Bn — green/dark blue  
19 Bn — red/white/red  
20 Bn — red/yellow/red  
21 Bn — red/black/red  
22 Bn — red/green/red  
23 Bn — red/blue/red  
24 Bn — green/yellow/green  
25 Bn — green/black/green  
26 Bn — green/white/green  
Tank Carrier Coys — green/brown  
Gun Carrier Coys — blue/white/blue  
Central Workshops — purple  
Advanced Workshops — purple/yellow/purple  
Central Stores — purple/white  
Tank Field Bn (Salvage Coy) — 4 rows of 8 black/white checks  
2 Salvage Coy — ditto, red/white

NCO) destroyed no less than 15 tanks of D and E Battalions. Curiously, the very fragility of the armour plate could also save a crew. A tank of G Battalion received a point blank, head-on hit from a field gun. The shell entered the cab, decapitated the driver, killed the two right-hand sponson gunners, then exited through the rear of the vehicle without detonating<sup>(5)</sup>. The tank returned safely.

Once disabled, a tank became the target of every gun in the vicinity. Frequently sheer concentration of small arms fire prevented crews from escaping. The Mk IV Male tank *Fray Bentos*, commanded by Lt. D. Richardson, ditched in a shellhole in full view of the enemy near St. Jean at Ypres, and was forced to act as a pill-box for 72 hours, under such intense small arms fire that the hull plates glowed red. The crew fought off company-strength attacks, and prevented counter-attacks on the infantry

behind them. Eventually wounds, thirst and heat exhaustion forced the crew to abandon the vehicle and head for home under the cover of darkness.

Male tanks, with their tall sponson doors, were easier to evacuate than Females. Mk I Females had only one 2 ft. high door at the bottom rear of the sponson, which was impossible to wriggle out of in a hurry. A.E. Lee recalled diving head first out of the driver's loophole of his Mk IV, an aperture 10 in. x 12 in. (255mm x 305mm); this was only possible because of his small stature, and the knowledge that 280 gallons of reserve fuel stored in the tank was on fire. Generally it was believed impossible to get out of the loophole<sup>(6)</sup>. Mk IV Females, with sponsons much reduced in size compared to their Mk I predecessors, more effectively utilised the hull space underneath the sponsons by having a pair of long narrow doors fitted, which were a great improvement on the 'coal hole' hatch of the Mk I. With both doors open, a crewman could evacuate the vehicle by lying flat on the floor and rolling out. Another roof hatch was added, but quick escape was never an easy matter. As Gunner Francis Redfern recounted in a letter home:<sup>(7)</sup>

'We were jolting along nicely when there was a terrific clang. Daylight flooded in from a big hole in the front. I couldn't see the captain or driver, everything was still and smoke was everywhere. The Lewis gunner was dead, blocking the sponson door, and I could feel the heat from the petrol tank, which must have been punctured. I pushed the hatch for all I was worth and tumbled out into a shellhole. I'm a bit singed but otherwise fine. I'm jolly lucky, I can tell you.'

## **UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA**

As with any newly raised military formation, there was considerable latitude over the wearing of uniforms on active service. Standard infantry service dress was the official issue for tank crews, but it soon became apparent that this was

impractical in the hot and oily confines of the tank. Overalls, in white, blue or black, were initially issued, which were lighter to wear and gave more freedom of movement. Although their usage was supposed to be restricted to training and maintenance men quickly adopted them for wear in action. In 1917 a tan-coloured overall was issued, which quickly became the preferred garment for use inside a vehicle.

In very hot weather crewmen would strip down to the barest essentials: trousers or shorts, shirt or singlet. Footwear was also left up to the indi-

vidual, with many using gym shoes in preference to the slippery ammunition boots. Officers adopted much the same garb, although a uniform jacket was invariably worn. Puttees were frequently dispensed with.

From late 1916 headgear was the standard issue Brodie shrapnel helmet. The early crews had been issued with a

*A fine portrait of a tank crewman, signed 'Geo. Vincent' and dated 9 September 1917. He wears an MGC cap badge, 'H/MGC' shoulder titles, and white embroidered tank insignia. He appears to wear breeches rather than issue infantry trousers. (Private collection)*







*A fine contemporary picture of a crew from No.2 Coy., B (2nd) Bn., immediately after the Cambrai battle of November 1917. Their open holsters and leather equipment are evident; gas masks are worn in the 'alert' position, and at least four carry splash masks at the right side of their belts — most clearly seen at front right and rear left. The shoulder strap tallies, in yellow for this battalion, are mostly worn as short patches sewn to the strap, but centre rear wears complete loops. (Private collection)*

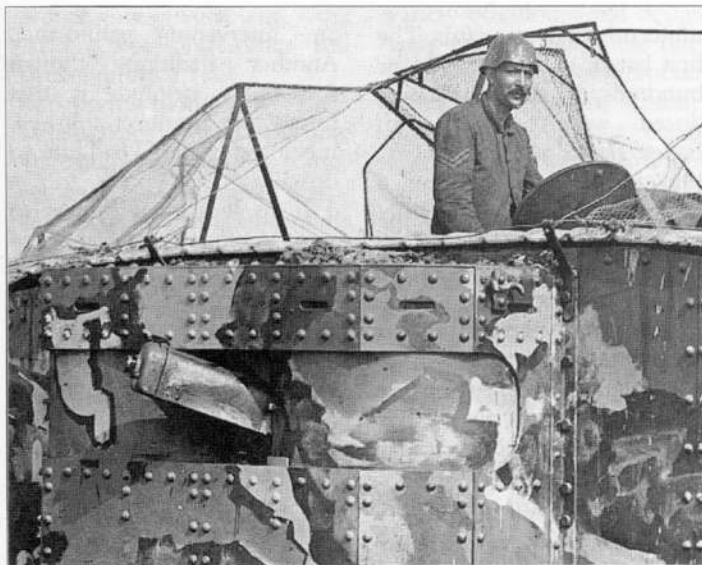


thick, rivetted, brown leather helmet that proved very unpopular; it was hot to wear, and at a distance resembled a *pickelhaube* minus its spike, often resulting in crews being shot at by confused British troops. Headgear, as with clothing, became a matter of choice; many preferred the steel helmet sitting loosely on the head, and gunners often wore their issue soft service caps, with peak to the rear so as not to interfere with vision.

It was problems with vision that led to the manufacture of one of the great collectables of the Tank Corps, the face mask. It is a remarkable piece of equipment, manufactured from shaped steel plate, faced with dark brown leather and padded with chamois. The lower portion is hung with closely linked steel mail, and the whole fetching ensemble is tied in place with white cotton ribbon. It was introduced in an attempt to combat 'splash', which took the form either of clouds of tiny steel particles blown from the plating by bullet impact, or chunks of bullet core or casing that found their way through chinks in the armour. Either could blind or disable, and the mask was an attempt to alleviate the problem. Whether it found favour with the crews is difficult to

*Much-reproduced but valuable photo of an officer (kneeling) and four crewmen examining a German T-Gewehr 13mm anti-tank rifle. Left and right men wear standard khaki service tunic and trousers without puttees or any equipment apart from gas masks; second from left wears the brown overall; and the officer wears service tunic, shorts, ankle boots and long socks, with a splash mask pushed up on his forehead — second right wears one round his neck. Two different shoulder strap tallies seem to be worn here, by left and right hand men. (Imperial War Museum)*





The early leather tank helmet worn by a corporal crewing a Mk.1 Female tank, 1916 — note shrouded Vickers MG sponson gun. His garment has exposed buttons, unlike the later brown overall, and may perhaps be the early blue issue. (Imperial War Museum)

assess. It was certainly something of a status symbol, as is evidenced by the number of crewmen photographed with them. The fact that many have survived in pristine condition would seem to indicate they were not necessarily put to practical use. It is certainly not a comfortable item to wear for any length of time. Captain Dalton remarked that 'the men found the masks hugely amusing, and would creep up behind each other making animal noises. Eventually the novelty wore off, and most were packed in with non-essential kit.'<sup>(8)</sup>

Crews were issued with 1914 pattern leather equipment, comprising a belt with S-buckle, shoulder straps, small ammunition pouch and open-topped holster. Much care was lavished on the leather for dress occasions. A.E. Lee recounts leaving for France with A Battalion:<sup>(9)</sup>

'Our uniforms were different in as much as they consisted of tunic and breeches (not issue trousers), brown boots and leather leggings, brown leather belt and holster. All our uniforms had been altered to fit, and hours of work had been spent with Kiwi Oxblood to get a high polish'.

#### Insignia

Until November 1916

Capt. A.G. Baker, MC & Bar, commander of Gorgonzola of G (7th) Bn.; a late-war photo showing the use of a variant on the tank sleeve badge, and Tank Corps collar dogs and buttons. (Private collection)

tank crew were referred to as Heavy Section, Motor Machine Gun Corps. This was subsequently changed to Heavy Branch, Motor Machine Gun Corps, a title which remained in use up to the formation of the Tank Corps on 28 July 1917.

Officers and Other Ranks wore MGC cap badges, but retained General Service or regimental buttons. Most officers also continued to wear their regimental collar dogs. A

number of shoulder titles sprang into existence. These include standard 'MGC', and variations such as 'H/MGC', 'HB/MGC', 'HS/MGC', and 'Tanks'.

The use of such insignia was authorised at company or battalion level, and it was not until July 1917 that the Corps took on a more cohesive identity with the adoption of a cap badge and shoulder title. The badge is a three-quarters front view of a tank, surrounded by laurel wreath, with the 'Tank Corps' legend. 'T.C.' shoulder titles were in brass, or cloth with white lettering on a khaki background. As late as mid-1918 some officers and Other Tanks are pictured with Tank Corps cap badges, but a variety of non-corps buttons and insignia. Generally speaking *esprit de corps* was high, and many went to extreme lengths to obtain the

correct insignia. The most distinctive and coveted item was the white embroidered tank worn on the upper right arm by all who had passed the training course. Sanctioned in May 1917, these were in very short supply, and many crude home-made versions appeared. Some men had theirs manufactured privately in the UK, and a number are believed to have been of local French make.

From January 1917 each battalion adopted distinguishing cloth shoulder strap loops of varying colours, a full list of which is given at the end of this article. In a unique honour, the 9th Battalion (after a tank attack led by Capt. J.T. Dalton alongside the French 'Guard' Division at Moreuil on 23 July 1918) were authorised to wear the badge of the 3rd French Division on the left cuff, and were also awarded the Croix de Guerre avec Palmes. Other insignia commonly seen worn by tank crews were proficiency badges worn on the right sleeve. Those related specifically to tank usage comprised the 'MG' in a wreath, for Vickers gunners, 'LG' for Lewis gunners, 'HG' for Hotchkiss machine gunners and 'GL' or 'L' for gun layer, a proficiency award for those who had completed the 6-pdr. course. These badges can be found in brass, or in the familiar white on khaki cloth format.

#### Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my grateful thanks to David Fletcher, Col. and Mrs. Forty and the staff of the Tank Museum at Bovington for enabling me to be acting unpaid gearsman for a day, and also for the loan of material and equipment for photographic use. Also to Tom Hill of the Great War Society for being exactly the correct size to fit all the uniforms.

**MI**

#### Notes:

- (1) F.C. Mitchell, *Tank Warfare*, T. Nelson Ltd, 1929
- (2) Ibid
- (3) H.L. Watson, *A Company of Tanks*, W. Blackwood, 1920
- (4) D.G. Brown, *A Tank in Action*, W. Blackwood, 1920
- (5) Personal Interview, 1984: Cpl. A.E. Lee, MM, A Bn.
- (6) Letter to his sister. Subsequently died of wounds 20.12.17 whilst serving with G (7th) Bn.
- (7) R. Haigh, *Life in a Tank*, Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1918
- (8) Public Record Office (WO195)
- (9) Personal Interview, 1984: Capt. J.T. Dalton, MC, G Bn.





# 50 Years of US Army Airborne Insignia

GORDON L. ROTTMAN  
Paintings by KEVIN LYLES

Since its formation in 1940 the US Army airborne branch has utilized a wide variety of traditional insignia to set the airborne troopers apart from their 'straight-leg' brothers-in-arms<sup>(1)</sup>. Each has its own story of evolution, a special meaning, and a record — usually — of stubbornly outlasting the Army hierarchy's opposition to its adoption or retention. The large number of different insignia, all identifying the airborne, may seem at first to be somewhat redundant; but as this article will attempt to show, each has its own distinct purpose and meaning.

## JUMPWINGS

The parachutist badge, or jumpwings, is the seminal airborne insignia. The effort to gain approval for a qualification badge began soon after the formation of the Parachute Test Platoon in July 1940. An unofficial spread-winged badge was made in extremely limited quantities; but the Army specified that any winged parachutist

badge could not be of the same dimensions as aviators' wings. The badge agreed upon was designed by Capt. William P. Yarborough, S2 of the Provisional Parachute Group. He had the foresight to copy-right the badge's distinctive design, not for personal gain, but in an effort to ensure that its design was standardized and that it was manufactured to

uniformly high standards. The first batch, of what would be hundreds of thousands produced, were ordered from Bailey, Banks and Biddle Co., Philadelphia jewellers, on 6 March 1941. Officially approved on 10 March, the 350 badges were delivered to the 501st Parachute Battalion in time for their presentation on 15 March. The badge was made of oxidized silver, 1½in. across and ⅝in. high; its dimensions have remained unchanged.

Five parachute jumps are required for award of the basic, or novice, badge. However, a soldier with only the simplest of ground training making a single combat jump 'as a member of an organized force carrying out an assigned tactical mission for which the unit was credited with an airborne assault landing' (not an emergency jump or agent infiltration) can be awarded the jumpwings. However, in order to be placed on permanent jump status he would have to complete jump school later.

A long-standing airborne tradition covers the wearing of a paratrooper's original or 'cherry wings', awarded upon completion of jump school. He will wear these wings until he makes his sixth, or 'cherry jump', with his new unit. After this he will no longer wear his 'cherry wings', but will purchase a new pair, his 'blood wings'. There are still a few units that continue the practice of pinning 'cherry wings' directly on a 'cherry jumper's' chest without benefit of

an intervening uniform.... Another tradition, though sometimes ignored, is that jumpwings are never polished, it being considered bad luck to do so.

If an individual refuses to jump or requests transfer out of an airborne unit prior to completing one year on jump status, his jumpwings will be revoked (though this is not always done in the latter instance). This does not apply if he is involuntarily assigned to a non-airborne unit after completing jump training or is reassigned on orders before serving one year in an airborne unit.

Senior jumpwings require a paratrooper to be jumpmaster-qualified and to have conducted a minimum of 30 jumps. He is also required to have jumpmastered a number of mass tactical training and night jumps and to have been on jump status for at least 24 months. Master jumpwings ('master blaster') require 65 jumps plus additional mass tactical and night jumps, and 36 months on jump status. Exact requirements for all ratings have changed over the years.

Besides the standard silver-coloured wings, other colours and materials have been issued. Embroidered white on olive green cloth wings came into common usage for wear on fatigue uniforms in the late 1950s. These were replaced by black on olive green cloth, and matt black metal wings, in September 1968 when subdued insignia were prescribed for field uniforms. On field uniforms they are worn above the US Army tape over the left chest pocket. On Class A and B service uniforms they may be worn above any ribbons or on the pocket flap depending on the wear of any other special skill badges. Prior to the early 1950s the jumpwings were generally worn above the Combat Infantryman's Badge (CIB); this has since been reversed. They were also authorized for wear on the baseball-type field cap from 1963<sup>(2)</sup> until the camouflage battle dress uniform (BDU) was adopted in 1983; only rank insignia may be worn on the BDU cap. Miniature jump-

*PFC Erwin E. Shaffer is pictured upon returning home from service with the 504th Pch. Inf. Regt., 82nd Abn. Div. from 1943 to 1945. He had recently been awarded several decorations including the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. On his jumpwings are three small bronze stars representing his combat jumps at Gela, Sicily; Salerno, Italy; and Nijmegen, Holland. A gold-framed royal blue Presidential Unit Citation ribbon is over his right chest; worn by many in the accompanying photos, this is the highest US unit award. He wears the white and light blue parachute infantry cap patch. Interestingly, and unofficially, he wears the First Allied Airborne Army patch on his right shoulder — not because he had served with it in combat, as was normal practice, but because the 82nd was attached to it.*





wings are worn on the Army Blue and other full dress uniforms.

#### Jumpwing ovals

When the 501st Parachute Battalion received their jumpwings they were mildly disappointed at how insignificant the small insignia appeared on the uniform: and Capt. Yarborough immediately set about to 'dress them up'. Red felt ovals, slightly larger than the wings and bordered with blue, were issued with the initial award of the badge. During the course of the war a number of units adopted similar ovals of different colours, though the practice was by no means universal. After the war most airborne units adopted ovals, and a wide

variety of colours and designs were introduced. These often incorporated the colours of unit crests or branch colours, though some rather bizarre combinations were also adopted. The colours are intended to designate specific units, and not branches of service as is sometimes reported. The use of ovals, or 'airborne background trimmings' as they are formally known, was not officially recognized until 1949, and they were not entered into the uniform regulations until 1956. Even then it was not uncommon for a smaller unit to wear another's oval or one belonging to their parent headquarters. Some units changed colours and designs almost as often as new commanders were assigned. Hundreds of designs and variants have been used, resulting in the US Army Institute of Heraldry (the design and approving authority for insignia) declining to guarantee that a specific design approved for a given unit is not worn by another. Ovals are generally  $2\frac{3}{16}$ in. x  $1\frac{5}{16}$ in., but many size and shape variations exist, including white wings embroidered directly on the oval. The 101st Airborne

Division was authorized to wear the Air Assault Badge on the oval on 30 October 1980. Ovals are not worn by parachute qualified personnel not assigned to an airborne unit.

#### Combat jump stars

The practice of affixing a small bronze star to the jumpwings to signify a combat jump was begun by the 82nd Airborne Division after the July 1943 Sicily jumps. It was not officially recognized, and the commanders of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions requested approval from Gen. Eisenhower. The War Department turned down the request, since individuals participating in combat assaults were authorized the bronze assault arrowhead device on the appropriate service ribbon. It was felt that the use of bronze stars on jumpwings was redundant, and unfair to troops participating in glider landings and amphibious assaults, who had no other means of displaying similar devices (glider troops were not yet authorized a distinctive badge). The practice continued, however, and was generally accepted as 'semi-official' over the years. It was not until

after the 1st and 2nd Ranger Battalions' 1983 jump on Grenada that the award of bronze combat jump stars was made official, this being authorized in early 1984 and made retroactive back to the Army's first combat jumps. The combat jump star was again awarded for the 82nd Airborne's and 75th Rangers' 1989 jumps in Panama. Field uniform jumpwings embroidered in black on olive green often have a small light brown combat jump star added by those so authorized. The award of the stars was

#### Bottom left:

PFC Melvin C. Tienary of the 460th Prcht. Field Arty. Bn. attached to the 517th Prcht. Inf. Regt'l. Combat Team. The unit was originally assigned to the 17th Abn. Div. and later served with the 1st Abn. Task Force, with which it jumped into southern France. It was assigned to the 13th Abn. Div. in 1945. The cap patch is white on red. Of interest are the totally unauthorized miniature jumpwings fixed to the cap's right side; miniature wings were intended to be worn only on dress uniforms.

#### Bottom right:

Lt. Col. Hubert S. Bass, commanding the 2nd Bn. 505th Prcht. Inf. Regt., 82nd Abn. Div. from 1941 to 1945. The sparse decorations adorning his 'pinks and greens' (light khaki shirt, tie and trousers — 'pink'; dark olive drab cap and coat — 'green') give no hint of the number to which he was actually entitled. Nor does he wear any combat jump stars on his wings, even though he participated in all four of his regiment's combat jumps. This modesty regarding decorations was a common practice among 505th officers. Though the unit was designated 'parachute' rather than 'airborne', it wore the combination parachute/glider cap patch, here affixed to the cap's right side as required for officers.





Ralph Brouillard, who could boast a unique record, also displays some equally unique uniform distinctions after his discharge (a discharge insignia is worn above the Presidential Unit Citation on his right chest). He had served with the US Marines in 1937-40 before enlisting in the Army. His jumpwing oval is the red-white-blue with a gold yellow border which distinguished the 1st Special Service Force, in which he served from 1942-44. Note also the Force's red-white-blue shoulder lanyard (made by unit riggers); and the 'USA/CANADA' arrowhead patch, in an unprecedented position on his right sleeve cuff. During 1944-45 he served in the 504th Pch. Inf. Regt's. Reconnaissance and Intelligence Platoon, 82nd Abn. Div. and the 504th's unofficial patch is worn on his right shoulder. Brouillard also had the habit of not wearing any rank insignia. (See 'First Special Service Force, 1942-44', Military Illustrated Nos. 1 & 2, 1986.)

restricted to mass tactical jumps and not for the insertion of small special operations teams or agent infiltration (though individuals participating in such operations have worn them). Special Forces personnel participating in the five Mobile Strike Force (MIKE Force) mass combat jumps executed in Vietnam were not awarded the stars, though the Air Medal was presented to some.

#### Glider badge

Glider troops were not authorized a badge until 14 March 1944, principally because they were not volunteers<sup>(3)</sup>. By early 1944 it had been realized that glider landings, even in training, involved substantially more risk than normal infantry training. The glider troops were not granted hazardous duty pay until 4 July 1944. There were no senior and master ratings of the glider badge. The badge was awarded after participation in one combat landing or one training landing with full combat equipment. In 1947-48 all parachute and glider units were redesignated as Airborne, with both parachute and glider training undertaken. Though the Army ceased glider training during the Korean War and eliminated it altogether on 1 January 1953, those who had been awarded the badge continued to wear it. (Glider pilots, assigned to the Army Air Forces, were authorized a silver-coloured Glider Pilot

Badge on 4 September 1942, similar to the standard pilot wings but with a 'G' on the shield.)

#### Pathfinder badge

The Pathfinder's winged torch badge was designed by an Army Air Forces navigator, Lt. Prescott, assigned to the 9th Troop Carrier Pathfinder Group (Provisional). Besides specially trained paratroopers who jumped in ahead of the main body to mark drop and landing zones, included among the Pathfinders were highly

vice coats, they were not at that time authorized for wear on field uniforms. Being an unofficial insignia, many variants were made, including backing colours ranging from dark blue to dark red. After the war the torch began to be worn on field uniforms. It was finally officially approved in 1952, with a gold winged torch and light blue and red flames embroidered on a black rectangular backing. It was worn on the lower left sleeve of both field and service uniforms. Again, the backing



skilled transport crews trained to guide paratrooper-laden and glider-towing transports to the designated release points. Both groups of volunteers wore the winged torch. Designed in May 1944, it was issued to Pathfinders the day before the Normandy jump.

Original insignia were embroidered on a 2½in. x 3in. dark purple wool backing; prior to sewing on the uniform, however, these were trimmed down to the insignia's outline. Sewn on the lower left sleeve of ser-

vice coats, they were not at that time authorized for wear on field uniforms. Being an unofficial insignia, many variants were made, including backing colours ranging from dark blue to dark red. After the war the torch began to be worn on field uniforms. It was finally officially approved in 1952, with a gold winged torch and light blue and red flames embroidered on a black rectangular backing. It was worn on the lower left sleeve of both field and service uniforms. Again, the backing

On 24 January 1968 the full-size embroidered insignia was replaced by small metal pin-on full-colour and black subdued

versions. However, these did not become available for a year and the cloth version was authorized until 1 July 1969. Initially it was to be worn in lieu of the jumpwings but, after Pathfinders' protests, both badges were authorized for simultaneous wear in 1969. Pathfinders have traditionally worn a black baseball cap since the early 1960s, as do parachute instructors and jumpmasters when performing their ground duties.

Pathfinders are required to graduate from the Infantry School Airborne Department's Pathfinder Course, which has been in intermittent operation at Ft. Benning since 1946. The course length has varied from two to five weeks, and since the advent of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), non-airborne personnel may attend.

#### Rigger's wings

The widespread rigger's wings were the idea of Maj. Thomas R. Cross, commander of the 11th Airborne Division's Special Troops (Rear), which included the 11th Airborne Parachute Maintenance Company. The idea began to develop in 1948 while the division was still in Japan; but it was not until 1950, after it had deployed to Ft. Campbell, Ky., that Maj. Cross brought it to life. The first version was an embroidered white and blue half-wing, but this was short-lived, and the familiar wings were soon introduced. Originally each of the 11th Parachute Maintenance Company's sub-elements wore a different coloured baseball cap, but before long the entire unit settled on the riggers' red. On its front was affixed the black-bordered, thickly-embroidered, blue-highlighted white wings inscribed with 'RIGGER' in red. These were also worn above the right chest on field uniforms.

In 1950 the Quartermaster Corps assumed responsibility for riggers and the Parachute Rigger School was transferred from Ft. Benning, Ga., to Ft. Lee, Va.<sup>(4)</sup>. Though not officially recognized, the rigger's wings continued to be worn on the red baseball cap and field uniform. In 1968 black and olive green embroidered versions



were introduced.

It was not until late 1986 that the wings were officially recognized, though a smaller silver-coloured metal version was adopted and is now worn over the left pocket. Though the new metal wings are smaller, the subdued black on olive green version is as large as the old full-colour ones, but made in the same style as other cloth badges. The old full-colour versions are sometimes still worn on the red cap. In order to earn the riggers' wings personnel must be qualified parachutists and must have completed the 16-week Parachute Packing, Maintenance, and Drop Course. They must also be willing to jump any parachute they pack, which they are frequently required to do, explaining the riggers' motto: 'I will be sure always!'

#### THE AIRBORNE TAB

The familiar arc-shaped airborne tabs were first authorized for wear by the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions when they were converted from infantry in August 1942. The 82nd used a white on medium blue version, while the 101st Airborne's was gold yellow on black, both to match their divisional shoulder patches. These two colour combinations became more or less standard, though a small number of units adopted different colour tabs to match their patches:

White/red — Abn. Engr.

Aviation Bns. (1943-45)<sup>(5)</sup>,

84th Abn. Div. (1947-52)

Light blue/olive drab — 80th

Abn. Div. (1946-52)

White/light blue — 187th Abn.

Regt'l. Combat Team (unofficial 1951-53)

Red/black — 1st Battle Grp.

(Abn.), 187th Inf., 24th Inf.

Div. (unofficial 1958-59)

In the early 1950s the white/blue and gold/black tabs were made standard, with no other colours officially authorized; units wore whichever tab best colour co-ordinated with their patches. This tradition was broken when a red on black tab was authorized for the new US Army Special Operations Command (Airborne) in November 1989 in order to

match its patch. This will no doubt serve to set a precedent for future newly authorized airborne insignia. Though most tabs are separate from the patch, patches have been made with the tab as an integral part.

There has long been a misunderstanding as to the purpose of the airborne tab. It does not signify that an individual is airborne qualified, but rather that a unit is designated airborne by the Department of the Army. Non-airborne personnel assigned to airborne units, and non-airborne units assigned (not temporarily attached) to an airborne formation, are authorized the airborne tab<sup>(6)</sup>. Small airborne units assigned to a non-airborne formation are authorized to wear the airborne tab over their parent unit's patch; for example, Pathfinder and long range surveillance units assigned to divisions or corps.

#### THE AIRBORNE GARRISON CAP

The garrison (or overseas) cap fell from general use within the Army following World War I, though retained by the Army Air Corps. In July 1940 the Parachute Test Platoon were issued khaki garrison caps for wear with their mechanic's coveralls while conducting ground training. Since the service hat ('Smokey Bear') was still in Army use, the Paratroopers soon began to wear garrison caps with their khaki uniforms as a distinctive item. With the expansion of the airborne and adoption of the distinctive cap patches, the garrison cap became the sole headwear for airborne troops with service uniforms, the visored service ('saucer') cap being completely shunned by paratroopers thereafter. To this day it is difficult for a paratrooper to

don the despised 'bus driver's' cap when assigned to a non-airborne unit.

Between 1940 and 1957 both khaki and olive drab garrison caps were issued. Enlisted men's caps were piped in their unit's branch colour, while company and field grade officers' caps were piped with interwoven gold colour and black; gold-coloured piping was worn by generals, and silver-coloured and black interwoven by warrant officers. In 1957 the Army Green garrison cap was introduced with the new uniform. Officers' piping remained the same, while enlisted men's was changed to a common Army Green. With the adoption of the maroon beret the garrison cap lost much of its long-held symbolism for the airborne; but nonetheless,

when combined with the 'glider patch' it is still an airborne-unique headgear. Though airborne units now wear the beret, the garrison cap and 'glider patch' are still worn in a few instances, e.g. by students in the 1st Special Warfare Training Group.

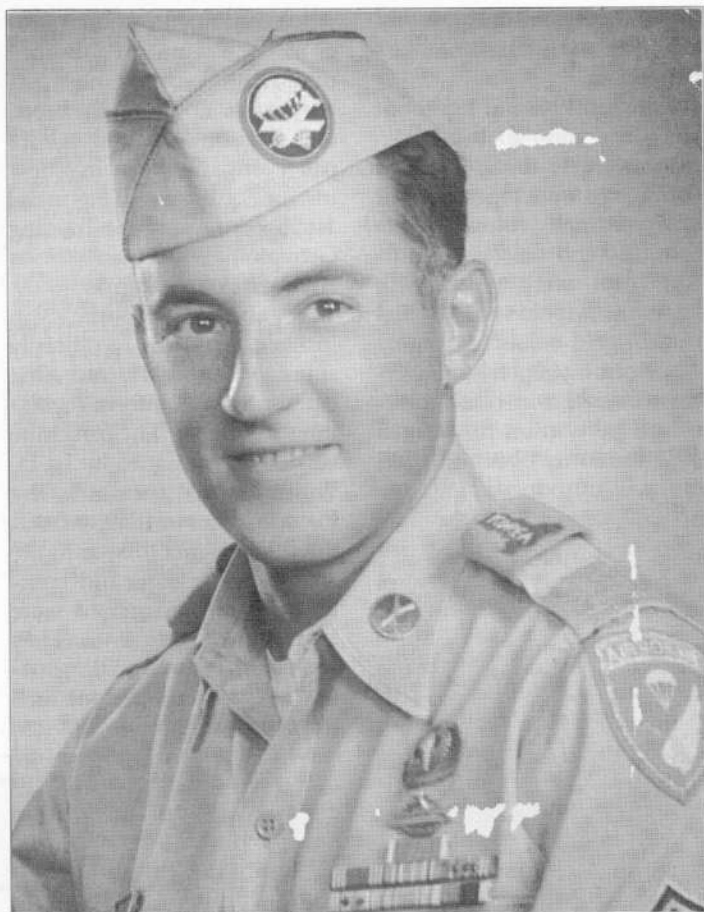
#### Airborne cap insignia

The circular airborne cap insignia were officially approved in 1941 and first entered in the uniform regulations in August. The parachute version was designed by 1st Lt. William Ryder, Parachute Test Platoon leader in 1940, and was the first insignia unique to the airborne. The glider and 'combined' airborne versions were introduced in late 1942. They were worn centred on the garrison cap's side curtain one inch from the leading edge. Enlisted

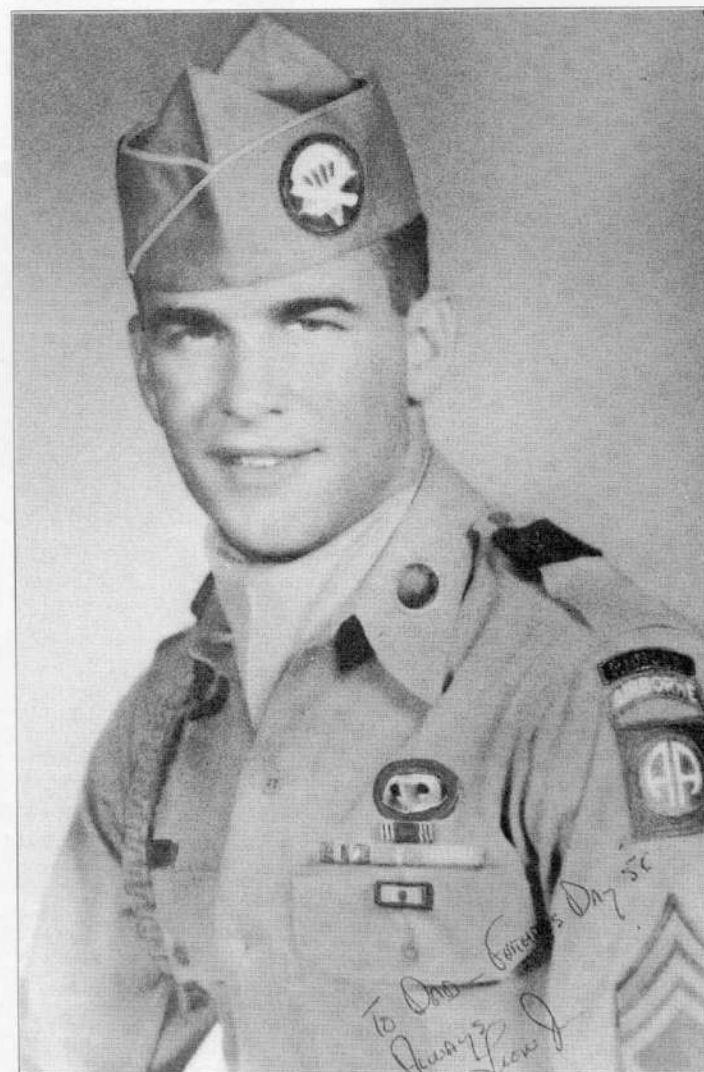
*PFC George W. Swinney served with the 82nd Abn. Div. through much of World War II. The three small gold yellow bars on his 'Ike' jacket's left cuff each represent six months in a combat zone. The trousers are not actually bloused into the boots, themselves laced with white parachute suspension line, but are secured with blousing rubbers. The popular 'Ike' jacket was used until 1958 when Army Green uniform replaced all olive drab items.*







Staff Sgt. George Lachance served with the 513th Pchlt. Inf. Regt., 17th Abn. Div. in Europe in 1943-45 and the 187th Abn. Reg'l. Combat Team in Korea in 1950-51. A number of interesting insignia adorn his khaki uniform. The shoulder strap tab is unofficial, and was worn by some members of the 187th; its colours are thought to be white lettering on a dark blue outline of Korea embroidered on light blue felt. The regimental patch is one of many variants, this one with the tab made as part of the insignia: white lettering, border and devices embroidered on light blue felt. His Combat Infantryman's Badge is the miniature version usually worn on dress uniforms, and mounts a star signifying a second award — World War II and Korean War. His rank chevrons are the medium blue on gold yellow 'goldenlute' insignia; if the colours were reversed it would identify a non-combat arms NCO.



men's are worn on the left side (in the place of unit crests) and officers' on the right; officers also wear their rank insignia on the left side. For this reason, from 1943, mirrored insignia were manufactured for officers so the glider would always face to the front. Originally insignia bearing the parachute were intended for units designated 'parachute', those with the glider for 'glider' units, and the combination parachute and glider insignia for units designated 'airborne' (7). During World War II they were manufactured in the following standard colours:

Parachute Infantry — white parachute and border, light blue backing

Parachute Artillery — white parachute and border, red backing

Glider Infantry — white glider, light blue border, medium blue backing

Sgt. First Class Leon Peine Jr. while assigned to the 504th Abn. Inf. Regt., 82nd Abn. Div. in 1955-57. Peine also served with the 2nd Abn. Battle Grp., 505th Inf., 11th Abn. Div. in 1957-58; 1st Abn. Battle Grp., 504th Inf., 8th Inf. Div. in 1959-61; 1st Bn. (Abn.), 327th Inf., 101st Abn. Div. in 1961-63; and Ranger Advisory Team 77 in Vietnam in 1963-64. The branch of service collar disks have infantry light blue plastic backings, the same colour as his scarf and garrison cap piping. His regimental crests are worn on medium green combat leader shoulder strap tabs identifying his position as a rifle platoon sergeant. A gold yellow on black Ranger tab is sewn above the 82nd patch. His chevrons are light olive drab on navy blue.

Glider Artillery — white glider, red border, medium blue backing

Airborne Units — white glider and parachute, red border, medium blue backing

1st Abn. Task Force (unofficial) — red glider and border, white backing.

Units other than infantry and artillery wore the colour closest to their branch colour with no firmly established guidance, though engineers always wore the artillery's patch. There were a number of unofficial colour combinations, usually with different backings or borders reflecting branch colours, though these were not common.

(A common wartime and postwar practice was to sew a silver dollar under the insignia as emergency funds, or as an aid to settling bar arguments with a smack across an antagonist's face.)

The distinction between parachute and glider infantry regiments and artillery battalions was eliminated in 1947-48 when all existing active regiments and battalions were redesignated Airborne. With this redesignation the combination parachute/glider insignia was made standard for all units in order to highlight the airborne's glider heritage. Today this combination insignia is simply if perhaps confusingly called the 'glider patch'.

As with the airborne tab, non-airborne personnel assigned to an airborne unit may wear the patch. Airborne qualified individuals not assigned to an airborne unit are not authorized its wear — with the exception of airborne qualified recruiters and cadre assigned to training units, who are authorized its wear in an effort to encourage recruits to volunteer for airborne duty. It is not uncommon, however, for paratroopers to retain the 'glider patch' if transferred to a non-airborne unit.

### The maroon beret

The maroon beret was awarded to the 2nd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment in 1943 by the commander of the British Airborne Forces in



## Captions to Kevin Lyles' colour paintings overleaf:

### (A) Staff Sergeant, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1945

The 501st PIR, fully formed in November 1943, was in effect a new unit, the original 1941 elements having been absorbed into the 503rd PIR. The new 501st boasted several unique insignia and practices. The new unit's commander opted to design a new crest to replace the earlier 'winged Indian' style. The Indian head version was never recognized by the Army, but the unit continued to wear it, as well as using 5in. and 6in. diameter patches of the same design on field jackets. Common practice was to wear the crest on the cap's left front with the parachute cap patch on the right, although regulations required the enlisted man's patch to be worn on the left with no crests. Another unofficial practice was the wearing of combat leadership stripes on the left or both jacket sleeves; these probably influenced the later Combat Leader tabs worn on shoulder straps. Other uniform adornments include the Belgian Croix de Guerre fourragère, and the Netherlands orange lanyard; Presidential Unit Citation (framed royal blue ribbon); diagonal three-year service stripe; overseas service bars (each representing six-months in a combat zone); jumpwings (with two combat jump stars) on the unit's oval — the first to be adopted; and Combat Infantryman's Badge.

### (B) Captain, 508th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, 1954

The Ft. Bragg-based 508th ARCT was a self-contained separate regiment. (The 508th ARCT comprised the 508th Abn. Inf. Regt., 320th Abn. Field Arty. Bn., 427th Abn. AA Bty., 598th Abn. Engr. Co., and

519th Abn. QM Co.; this is a correction of the author's *Osprey Elite 31* 'US Army Airborne 1940-90', page 20). Typical of the uniforms of the period, this company commander wears the khaki summer service uniform. All airborne units now wore the combined airborne cap insignia, or 'glider patch', on the garrison cap, in this case on the cap's right side as prescribed for officers. The design of the jumpwing oval dates from World War II, while the patch, adapted from the 82nd Airborne Division's, was adopted when the unit was reactivated as a separate regiment in early 1951.

### (C) Sergeant, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, 1970

Four of the Rock Regiment's battalions were to serve with the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) between 1963 and 1972. The Army Green Uniform (AG 44, 344, or 444, depending on the fabric) was adopted in 1957 to replace the traditional olive drab. Along with it came black footwear replacing the brown. There were no differences between officer's and enlisted uniforms other than insignia. The light blue shoulder cord and plastic branch of service collar disc backings were reserved for members of infantry units (though garrison cap branch of service piping was replaced by a common Army green); other branches were not authorized similar distinctions. The green shoulder strap tabs designate the soldier as a Combat Leader, and are worn by fire team, squad and platoon leaders; platoon sergeants, first sergeants and command sergeants major; and officers commanding company, battalion and brigade-size units; generals do not wear Combat Leader tabs. The tan poplin shirt was worn without any insignia and was strictly an undergarment.

### (D) 1st Lieutenant, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 504th Infantry, 1991

In 1991 a refined version of the Army Green uniform was introduced; it is slightly darker than the earlier pattern and the lapels are wider. Besides differences in rank and branch of service insignia, officers wear black mohair braid on the coat cuffs and trouser seams.

The grey-green shirt was introduced in 1976 to replace the tan. In 1985 the combination of Army Green trousers and long or short-sleeve grey-green (AG 415 or 428) shirt replaced the earlier khaki uniforms as a Class B uniform; with the coat it became a Class A. Only rank insignia and plastic name plates were then authorized on the shirt. Corporals and below wear brass pin-on collar rank insignia while NCOs wear gold embroidered rank on black slip-on shoulder strap marks, and officers wore their rank on similar Army Green loops with the addition of a thin gold stripe across the base. In 1991 the officers' marks were ordered to be changed to black as well. Decorations and awards were finally authorized on the grey-green shirt when worn as a Class B uniform in 1989.

The unit's Belgian Croix de Guerre fourragère is worn at the left shoulder. This officer's decorations indicate he served in the Sinai with the UN, the Panama invasion, and the Gulf War — demonstrating that America is no longer reluctant to employ its armed forces as it was in the post-Vietnam 1970s.

### Airborne Insignia, 1940-90

- (1) Unofficial Parachutist Badge, 1940.
- (2) Basic Parachutist Badge on a World War II 509th Prcht. Inf. Bn. oval.
- (3) Senior Parachutist Badge on a

current 1st Bn. (Abn.) 325th Inf. oval. This is depicted correctly placed with the wings centred irrespective of the star. Often the wings are placed lower on the oval to centre the entire badge.

- (4) Master Parachutist Badge on a circa 1950s XVIII Abn. Corps 'humpbacked' oval made to accommodate senior and master jumpwings.
- (5) Basic Parachutist Badge with two combat jump stars on a 511th Prcht. Inf. Regt. oval. A third star would be centred on the parachute suspension lines.
- (6) Glider Badge. These were not generally worn on ovals.
- (7) Embroidered World War II Pathfinder Badge.
- (8) Embroidered Pathfinder Badge, 1964-68.
- (9) Metal Pathfinder Badge, 1968 to present.
- (10) Original unofficial Rigger's Badge, used briefly by the 11th Abn. Div.
- (11) Embroidered semi-official Rigger's Badge.
- (12) Metal official Rigger's Badge.
- (13) Standard airborne tabs; other unofficial colours were used.
- (14) Parachute infantry cap insignia.
- (15) Parachute artillery cap insignia.
- (16) Enlisted man's glider infantry cap insignia, also made with a white glider and border on a light blue backing. The officer's version was reversed.
- (17) Enlisted man's glider artillery cap insignia. The officer's version was reversed.
- (18) World War II enlisted man's airborne cap insignia.
- (19) Current officer's airborne cap insignia.
- (20) 1st Bn. (Abn.), 507th Inf. beret flash (the present airborne training unit) as worn by enlisted men, with the unit crest.
- (21) The newly adopted Joint Readiness Training Center beret flash as worn by officers, here a major.

recognition of the close ties they developed during training. Due to beret shortages they were not actually issued, but small quantities were later acquired by some personnel. It was also unofficially awarded to members of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion (Colored), and possibly to other personnel, upon completing their jump training in 1944-45.

Due to Special Forces' then unofficial wear of the green beret, the 82nd Airborne Division requested approval to wear the maroon beret in 1956, only to be denied by the Department of the Army. From 1961 the V and VII Corps LRRP Companies in Germany worn French-made maroon berets, as most other NATO LRRP units then being formed wore them. It was subsequently banned in

1964 by Lt. Gen. Creighton Abrams. The maroon beret was not again worn by the US airborne until 1973, when the Infantry School's Airborne Department was authorized it on a local basis.

In 1974 the Army chief of staff, Gen. Creighton Abrams, authorized the wear of non-standard headwear in an effort to promote *esprit de corps* and raise the Army's sagging post-Vietnam morale. The instructors and cadre of the Airborne Department and the 82nd Airborne Division began widespread wear of the maroon beret in 1974, as did the Texas Army National Guard's 36th Airborne Brigade the following year. Other airborne units were quick to follow in adopting what had become a virtual inter-national symbol of the airborne

community. Since the beret was not official nor issued free, a simple option was offered individuals to encourage its purchase and wear: the only authorized headwear in many airborne units were now the beret or the steel helmet.

Since Gen. Abrams' authorization for non-standard headgear offered no specific guidance, it was not long before the situation got entirely out of hand. All kinds of bizarre headgear made their appearance, including Stetsons, Panama hats, coloured baseball caps, and a rainbow of berets. Only the Special Forces and Rangers were actually authorized their green and black berets. In 1977 Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) banned most non-standard headgear, permitting the retention of semi-offi-

cial berets only to the airborne — maroon; 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) — medium blue; 172nd Infantry Brigade (Arctic) — olive drab; and armor and cavalry units — black.

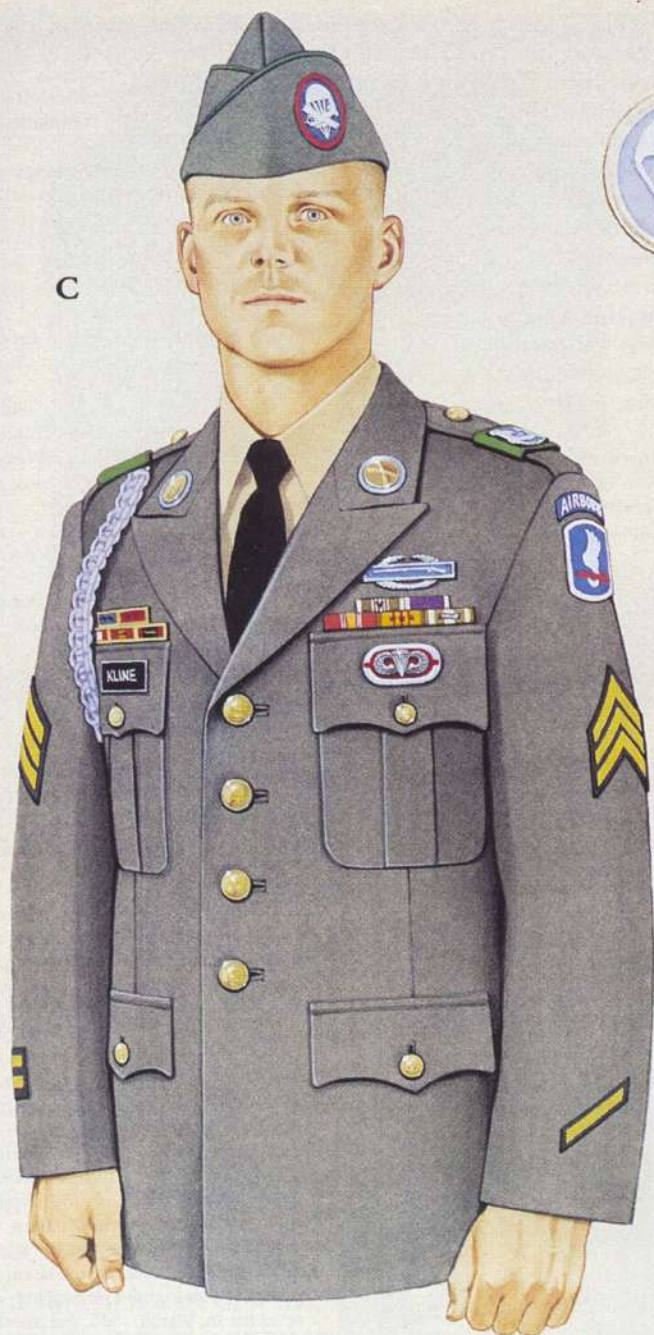
In November 1978 the new chief of staff, Gen. Bernard Rogers, banned all unofficial berets. Many airborne units conducted military funerals and mass burials of their berets. The airborne were never reconciled to the loss of the beret and actively lobbied for its restoration. This effort was finally successful when the new chief of staff, Gen. Edward Meyer, authorized the airborne their beret on 28 November 1980 as one of his first official acts. The maroon beret was made official in the uniform regulations one year later. The controversy has



(See captions on previous page)







14



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25





1st Lt. Jim Bilnoski provides an example of the airborne maroon beret, prior to its banning. He served with the 4th Bn. (Lt. Tank) (Abn.) 68th Armor, 82nd Abn. Div. in 1976-78 and the 2nd Bn. (Abn.) 143rd Inf, 36th Abn. Bde. in 1978-80. The beret flash and jumpwing oval are the traditional armor colours of gold yellow over medium green. On his Army Green uniform is worn the green and red Belgian Croix de Guerre fourragère awarded to the 82nd in World War II.

not ended, however. In some divisions long range surveillance detachments, themselves airborne units, are not allowed to wear the maroon beret, apparently a point of jealousy on some commanders' part.

### Beret flashes

Originally introduced by Special Forces to identify individual groups, the beret flash was adopted by the airborne along with the maroon beret. Existing units simply designed flashes of the same colours and pattern as their own jumpwing ovals. Later, as new units were formed, they designed their own matching flashes and ovals. Flashes are worn over the left eye. Enlisted personnel wear their unit crest, and officers their rank insignia, centred on the flashes.

### Jump boots

Probably one of the most distinctive uniform items of the paratrooper, the jump boots are considered an 'insignia' in their own right. Highly spit-shined and with service uniform trousers bloused into the boot tops<sup>(8)</sup>, the boots are as much a source of pride to many paratroopers as are their jumpwings. They are also somewhat sensitive about them. There was a time when a 'leg' found wearing jump boots quickly discovered they could rapidly be converted to low-quarters with the aid of rigger's knives wielded by irate paratroopers. Many young brides have been shocked to learn, from their future husband's solemn-faced buddies, that paratroopers *never* remove their boots.

When in 1944 the issue of paratrooper boots ceased and they were replaced by the new standard M1944 combat boot, the outcry was almost as loud as that which would later greet the beret ban. It was not until after

the war that the Army adopted a standard boot similar to the old paratrooper model; in the meantime paratroopers simply purchased their own boots using their extra jump pay. This was done without question and as a matter of pride and the practice is still continued. The accepted pattern paratrooper boots — usually referred to as 'Corcorans' after the original 1941 manufacturer, even though they may be made by other firms — have capped toes, thick soles, and are higher topped than standard combat boots. They were dark brown

Gen. Ridgway, commanding the 82nd, authorized his staff to wear them if they undertook a single parachute jump (without completing full jump training), though not the jumpwings... they flocked to the chance. The 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, in retaliation, posted a notice that any paratrooper making a single glider landing was authorized to wear low-quarter shoes and straight trousers!

**MI**

### Further reading:

'A Concise History of US... Army Special Operations Forces' (Vol. 1); 'Airborne Army, Corps, Divisions and



until 1957 when the Army changed to black footwear. Today's jump boots are not generally worn in the field, but only with Class A and B service uniforms, standard issue combat boots being used in the field. The wearing of boots with Class A uniforms is so strongly entrenched that paratroopers returning from Vietnam were issued new boots simply to wear for the flight home after their discharge.

The prestige of the jump boots and parachute cap badge were so strong that in 1943 Maj.

Brigades' (Vol. 2); 'Airborne Infantry' (Vol. 3); Anglo-American Publishing Co., 1988, 1989, 1989.

'Special Forces of the United States Army', R. James Bender Publishing, 1990.

'USA Airborne, 50th Anniversary, 1940-1990', Turner Publishing Co., 1990.

'US Army Special Forces 1952-84', Elite 4, Osprey Publishing Ltd., 1985.

'US Army Ranger and LRRP Units 1942-87', Elite 13, Osprey Publishing Ltd., 1987.

'US Army Airborne 1940-90', Elite 31, Osprey Publishing Ltd., 1990.

'Vietnam Airborne', Elite 29, Osprey Publishing Ltd., 1990.

### Notes:

(1) The phrase 'straight leg', or simply

'leg', is derived from the 'straight' trouser legs of non-airborne personnel, paratroopers' trousers being bloused into their jump boots. It is not generally considered a complimentary term.

(2) Silver-coloured jumpwings with an oval backing were worn on the 'baseball' cap until subdued insignia were introduced in 1968. Subdued jumpwings are never worn on the ovals, nor are subdued ovals authorized.

(3) The first Glider Infantry Regiments were formed in August 1942.

(4) Prior to 1947 parachute and air item procurement was the responsibility of the Army Air Force. When the branch became a separate service, procurement responsibilities were switched to the Quartermaster Corps. Prior to 1950 riggers were specially trained infantrymen.

(5) Airborne Engineer Aviation Battalions were glider/transport air-landed units assigned to the Army Air Forces and intended to repair captured airfields. They were not parachute trained.

(6) An exception to this policy is the airborne tab authorized for wear by the 101st Airborne Division for traditional reasons; although taken off jump status and converted to Airmobile in August 1969, the division still wears the tab.

(7) Until 1947-48 the term 'airborne' referred to units that were glider and air transport landing capable and possessed no parachute capability. Contrary to popular assumption, the majority of an airborne division's personnel, prior to 1945, were not parachute qualified, with the exception of the one parachute regiment (a second was usually attached), an FA battalion, Company C of the engineer battalion, and the parachute maintenance company; all of the support units were non-parachute. Even the divisional staffs were not parachute qualified for the most part. The mix of parachute and glider regiments was reversed in March 1945 and another parachute regiment attached, a second parachute artillery battalion was assigned, and the engineer battalion's Company B was made parachute.

(8) Blousing is accomplished by neatly tucking the trousers into the boots; however, it is not always done in this manner. In the early days it was not uncommon for two condoms to be knotted together and the trouser bottoms turned up inside with the 'blousing rubbers' holding them in place and giving the appearance of bloused trousers. Later, blousing garters — elastic cords with fastening hooks — were manufactured.

### Acknowledgement:

The author is indebted to Master Sergeant Allen Shoppe, who has 'popped more than just a few chutes' with this writer, for the loan of photographs from the 82nd Airborne Division Association Lone Star Chapter's Airborne Museum collection. The paratroopers pictured here represent some of the finest soldiers ever produced by the US Army.





# American Forces in the War with Mexico, 1846-48

## (I) The Course of the War

ROSS M. KIMMEL

In this first part of a major series, whose later parts will include colour reconstructions of US troops of the war based on the latest research, the author outlines the course of operations, and discusses some rare and valuable period photographs and paintings.

America in the mid-19th century was a bumptious and boisterous nation. The Age of Jackson<sup>(1)</sup> had heralded the rise of the common man, and the country's frontier was leapfrogging westward from the Mississippi Valley to the Pacific north-west, to California, and to Texas. American Democrats were imbued with the conviction that it was the God-given right of the United States to spread its presumed superior political, social, and economic institutions over the entire North American continent. It was in

this spirit of 'Manifest Destiny' that President James K. Polk had rattled his sabres over the Oregon Territory's border with British Canada. Polk ultimately settled for a more southerly boundary, the 49th parallel, to avoid a war that neither he nor the British wanted. His main reason for sidestepping war with Britain was his contemplation of war with Mexico over far greater prizes: Texas and California.

American settlers in Texas had achieved their independence from Mexico in 1836 and, in 1845, succeeded in their

desire for annexation to the USA. California Territory (which also included the modern states of Nevada, Utah, and Arizona, and parts of New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming) was so weakly administered from Mexico City that it had long since achieved *de facto* independence. The Mexican rancher population ('Californios') were rapidly losing ground to American opportunity-seekers who were pouring in and who, like the Anglo-Texans before them, favored annexation to the United States.

With much popular sentiment behind him, President Polk made an offer of \$25 million to Mexico for California (\$10 million more than President Jefferson paid Napoleon for the larger Louisiana Purchase in 1803). Polk also offered an additional \$5 million each for New Mexico and recognition of American claims to Texas. Mexico rebuffed the offer, and Polk decided that the issue would have to be settled by force-of-arms. He only needed an excuse to start a war, and this the Mexicans obligingly provided by questioning the border between Mexico and Texas: the US claimed the more southerly Rio Grande, and the Mexicans claimed the more northerly Nueces River. Polk dispatched Gen. Zachary Taylor and 3,500 US regulars into the disputed area. The Mexicans took the bait, and bloodied a small reconnaissance force of US dragoons on 25 April 1846. Polk used this incident to wring from Congress a declaration of war, which he signed on 13 May 1846.

### First engagements

In the meantime the first two major engagements of the War

with Mexico had already been fought. Manoeuvring around the north side of the mouth of the Rio Grande, Taylor, with a force of 2,300 regulars, was set upon by 6,000 Mexicans under Gen. Mariano Arista at a water hole called Palo Alto on 8 May 1846. In a five-hour engagement the American infantry broke up a Mexican cavalry assault over open ground, and superior US artillery finally drove the Mexicans from the field. Arista retreated southward to high ground near the town of Matamoros. Taylor, ignoring the advice of most of his subordinates, decided to pursue his numerically superior foe. With only 1,700 troops, he pressed about 5,700 Mexicans to battle at a ravine known as Resaca de la Palma on 9 May 1846. The Mexican force crumbled and retreated south of the Rio Grande. Meanwhile, a smaller Mexican force abandoned its siege of American-held Fort Texas on the north bank of the Rio Grande. Arista had, in effect, ceded the disputed Texas territory to Taylor. Taylor lost 48 killed and 128 wounded in the two battles; total Mexican casualties are estimated at 1,000. Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma set the pattern for the rest of the war: small but well-trained and well-led US armies would employ aggressive tactics to overcome larger, indifferently-trained, and poorly-led Mexican armies.

### Relative strengths

Total Mexican forces are thought to have numbered initially no more than 36,000 men, mostly poorly trained and equipped conscripts, though there were some elite units. The officer corps, comprising perhaps half the total number of men under arms, was bloated far beyond necessity and, with

### Top left:

Unknown soldier in infantry or artillery fatigue dress of the Mexican War period. Daguerrian portraits of enlisted personnel are extremely rare, and few subjects are identified. This lad wears the US M1839 forage cap minus company letter, and a variation on the 1830s fatigue jacket for infantry or artillery, the latter trimmed with yellow worsted lace. It departs from regulations in at least two respects: it lacks epaulettes, which would be trimmed with

worsted lace; and it lacks narrowly welted slash pockets on both sides of the front, about four or five inches up from the bottom edges. Although hard to judge, the buttons appear larger than the regulation 1/2 in. size. The author knows of one other portrait showing a jacket without epaulettes and with at least one uncharacteristically high, wide slash pocket. Both are probably US issue, but they may represent state volunteer clothing. (Courtesy William Schultz, MD).



A



B



C





D



E



### Eyewitness paintings of Scott's capture of Mexico City by James Walker.

Walker, an American of English birth, painted a series of highly accurate renderings of Scott's advance on the capital. In 1841, at the age of 23, Walker accepted an appointment to direct the Dept. of Drawing at the Military College at Tampico, Mexico. Finding the coastal climate disagreeable, he moved to Mexico City; at the outbreak of war the Mexican authorities arrested American residents, but Walker was shielded by friends. When Scott established his beachhead near Vera Cruz Walker made his way there to offer his services as a guide and interpreter; and thus enjoyed opportunities to record aspects of the war that the daguerrian camera could never capture. Details from several of his paintings which show interesting

points of clothing and equipage are reproduced here, courtesy of the Dept. of Defense Still Media Records Center.

(A) 'March from Puebla' (SDAN: CC-21817) offers a particularly good view of a column of infantry on the march. The sergeant at right foreground is dressed and accoutred according to the regulations for fatigue duty, with M1840 non-commissioned officer's sword and red sash. Note the number of men in shirtsleeves, both white and red — apparently common practice in sub-tropical Mexico.

(B) 'Detour around Lake Chalco' (SDAN: CC-21818) is another good study of a marching column; as always, Walker shows his subject from a realistic 'photographer's' viewpoint, depicting the men ahead of him in the column from the rear — a

quirk which historians might well wish was more widely found among historical military paintings. Most of these troops wear the overcoats which were necessary in the cold evening hours of the highland country; note that those of the dragoons are longer-caped than those of the infantry. The yellow hat bands identify the 2nd Dragoons; the 1st wore their caps plain. Mexican blankets, slouch hats and sombreros are all in evidence.

(C) 'Camp of Valencia [at] Contreras' (SDAN: CC-21819) shows an American assault. Note the two infantrymen at far left foreground, one in a sombrero and both with rolled blankets slung in lieu of knapsacks. The two shirtsleeved horsemen next to them are probably infantry officers; the one in a red shirt has ornate Mexican spurs. The mounted figure at far right appears to be a dragoon officer. Again,

note colourful locally acquired blankets. (D) 'Hill Omatusso' (SDAN: CC-21820) shows a mixed force of infantry and dragoons.

(E) 'Convent of Cherubusco' (sic) (SDAN: CC-21821) gives at left a particularly good rear view of infantry, all dressed according to US regulations for fatigue duty. The knapsacks are interesting: little solid evidence exists for them during this period, a topic which will be further discussed in Part 2. The sergeant at left foreground has a red sash, but not, apparently, the M1840 NCO's sword: no sling is evident, and there is only one visible scabbard, presumably for his bayonet. The mounted figure at the right, one of several in the entire painting, is a 'spy' — a Mexican in American service, wearing a red bandana round his sombrero to mark his allegiance.





the exception of the engineers (who showed remarkable skill in constructing entrenchments and fortifications), was of poor quality. Mexican ordnance was outdated and ammunition inferior to the modern and efficiently served guns of the Americans, which were organized into highly mobile light

batteries commanded by young West Point graduates.

At the war's outset US regular forces numbered fewer than 8,000 men. They were organized into eight infantry regiments, four artillery regiments, and two of dragoons. During the war this force was augmented to 31,000 regulars, including

marines, and a regiment of mounted riflemen. In addition to the regular troops were 73,000 volunteers organized in regiments raised by and bearing the names of the various states of the Union. The majority of the volunteers came from the Democratic states of the South and the Old North-West. The Whiggish north-eastern states tended to oppose 'Mr. Polk's War', fearing that territorial accretions in the South-West would result in the expansion of slavery and pro-slavery Democratic influence over national politics.

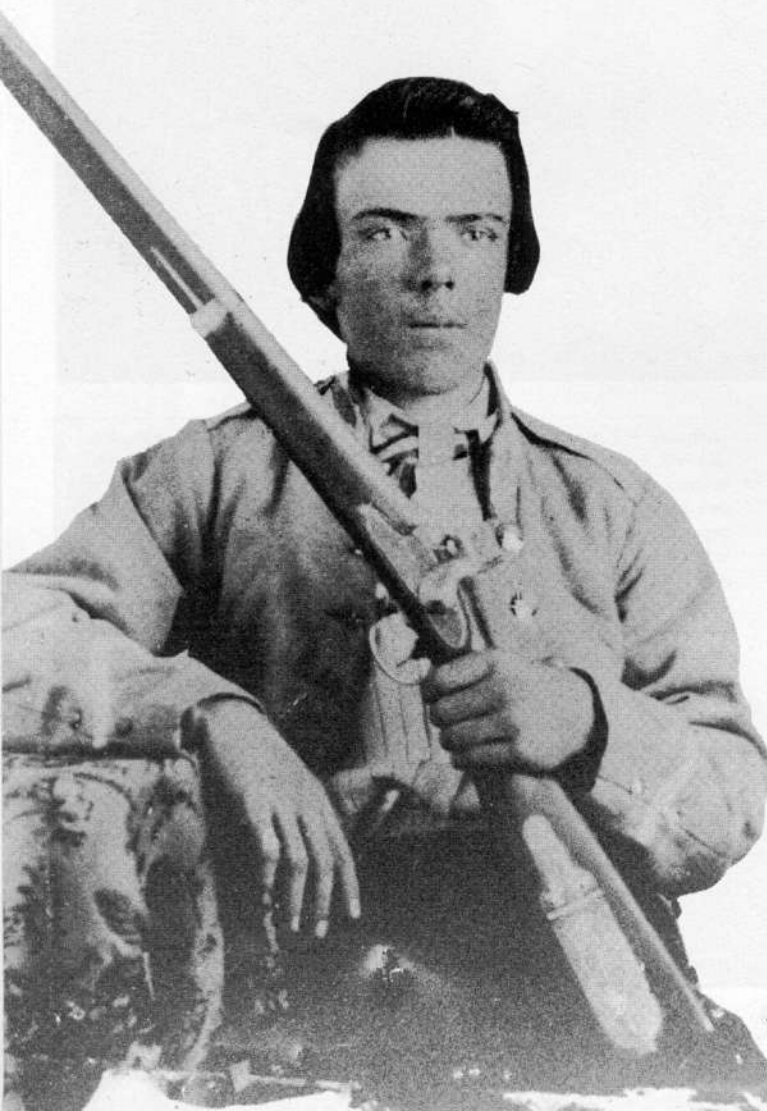
The two chief American generals, Taylor and Winfield Scott, proved to be masters of the battlefield — the militarily untutored Taylor through a natural instinct for the jugular, and Scott through deft application of strategic theory to campaign realities. The two generals were the centres of political intrigue, however, because of their allegiance to the Whig party, and their chief antagonist was none other than their president, Polk the Democrat. While Polk needed the battlefield success these two men

could give him, he feared that their military successes would endow the Whigs with attractive presidential contenders. (Subsequent events would vindicate the fretful chief executive; Taylor ran successfully for president in 1848<sup>(2)</sup>, though Scott lost to Democratic war veteran Franklin Pierce in 1852.)

One final point about the military significance of the War with Mexico is that it served as a training ground for future commanders in the Civil War. For the Union, besides Scott, the names Grant, Sherman, Meade, Hooker, McClellan, Pope, Thomas, Franklin, Sedgewick, Sykes, Fremont, Heintzelman, Reynolds, Burnside, Gibbon and Reno are among the more familiar officers who had served in Mexico. Among the leading Confederate Mexican War veterans were Lee, Jackson, Beauregard, A. S. Johnston, J. E. Johnston, Longstreet, Bragg, Ewell, Hill, E. K. Smith, Price and Hardee; and Confederate president Jefferson Davis had led a volunteer regiment of Mississippi riflemen in Mexico. One of the tragedies of the Civil War is that the aggressive tactics that had worked so well for these commanders in Mexico, their forces armed mostly with smoothbore artillery and small arms, would result in wholesale slaughter when used by troops armed with rifled weapons a decade and a half later<sup>(3)</sup>.

## CAMPAIGNS

There were two major campaigns during the war: that of Taylor in northern Mexico, and Scott's march from Vera Cruz to Mexico City. There were two smaller, but no less important land campaigns: Col. John C. Fremont's and, later, Gen. Stephen W. Kearny's marches through modern New Mexico and Arizona into California; and Col. Alexander Doniphan's march down to Chihuahua in Mexico, then east to rendezvous with Taylor at Monterrey. Naval operations under Commodore John D. Sloat and Commodore Robert F. Stockton on the coast of California were significant aids



Private Peter Walter Ott, Mounted Battalion, Louisiana Volunteers: a rare daguerreian study of an American volunteer bound for Mexico. Ott was mustered into service near the end of the major fighting, on 4 August 1847, and his unit did not get into action until well after the fall of Mexico City; Ott got his baptism of fire fighting guerrillas along the US lines of communication from the coast to the capital as part of Gen. Joseph Lane's volunteer brigade. What bullets failed to do, disease achieved: he was evacuated to Vera Cruz suffering from dysentery and, in the absence of improvement, on 3 January 1848 he was discharged and sent home. In 1863, in his mid-30s, Ott was drafted into Confederate service and enrolled in the CS Marines.

The date of this daguerreotype is not certain, but the fresh-faced Peter Ott appears much closer to the 21 years of age at which he enrolled for Mexican service than the 36 he was at the outbreak of the Civil War, by which time daguerreotype was anyway a thing of the past. He wears a light, possibly sky-blue volunteer's jacket with (probably) white lace trim. His weapon is the US M1841 'Mississippi' rifle, popular among mounted rifle units of the Mexican War. See also David M. Sullivan, 'Vignette: Peter Walter Ott, Veteran of Two Wars', *Military Images* magazine, Vol. V, No. 2, Sept.-Oct. 1983. (Courtesy Albert J. Ott)



to American pacification of California; and those under Commodore David E. Conner on the east coast of Mexico provided considerable assistance to American operations in that sector, especially Scott's landing near Vera Cruz.

#### **Taylor in Northern Mexico**

Zachary Taylor's battlefield successes were due in no small part to his popularity among his troops; they fondly called him 'Old Rough and Ready' because of his easy informality and his natural aggressiveness. Reared in frontier Kentucky and owner of plantations in Mississippi and Louisiana, Taylor lacked formal military training, but he displayed a no-nonsense go-for-the-throat campaign style and natural qualities of leadership that stood him in good stead. He was, for example, an expert marksman with tobacco spittle, and impressed his rustic soldiery by holding public demonstrations of this peculiar

prowess.

Characteristically, after forcing the Mexicans out of the disputed Texas territory, Taylor occupied Matamoros on the Rio Grande and laid plans to pacify northern Mexico. He amassed supplies and munitions at the mouth of the Rio Grande and began receiving nearly overwhelming numbers of state volunteer regiments. He quickly hammered out a lean fighting force of disciplined regulars and fractious, high-spirited volunteers. During the late summer of 1846 he moved his army of 15,000 up the Rio Grande, then westward into the highlands toward the Mexican city of Monterrey, capital of the state of Nuevo Leon. He arrived there on 19 September 1846 with a pared-down force a little in excess of 6,000<sup>(4)</sup> evenly divided between regulars and volunteers.

Never having attacked a fortified town, Taylor proceeded with fatal dispatch. Monterrey

was defended by 10,000 Mexicans under the butcher-general Pedro Ampudia<sup>(5)</sup>. Capturing two key fortified hills west of the city on 21 and 22 September, Taylor was soon poised to invest the city. A headstrong thrust by US troops first penetrated the city on 21 September, but heavy resistance forced their withdrawal at great loss. During the four-day siege which followed Taylor's initial indiscrete attack Ampudia's forces retreated into the Citadel, capitulating on 24 September. American losses numbered 120 killed and 368 wounded; combined Mexican losses were 367.

Feeling himself dangerously overextended, Taylor permitted the Mexican garrison to withdraw with arms and declared an eight-week armistice. President Polk disallowed the armistice; and by the time word of this reached Taylor (2 November 1846) the general was bracing himself for the approach of another Mexican force under the peripatetic general, and some-time dictator of Mexico, Antonio de Lopez de Santa Anna. Taylor sent word to Santa Anna that the armistice would end shortly, then sent a force to occupy the town of Saltillo, capital of Coahuila (6 November 1846). Meanwhile another American force of 3,000 under Gen. John E. Wool gingerly felt its way toward the Mexican state of Chihuahua from San Antonio, Texas.

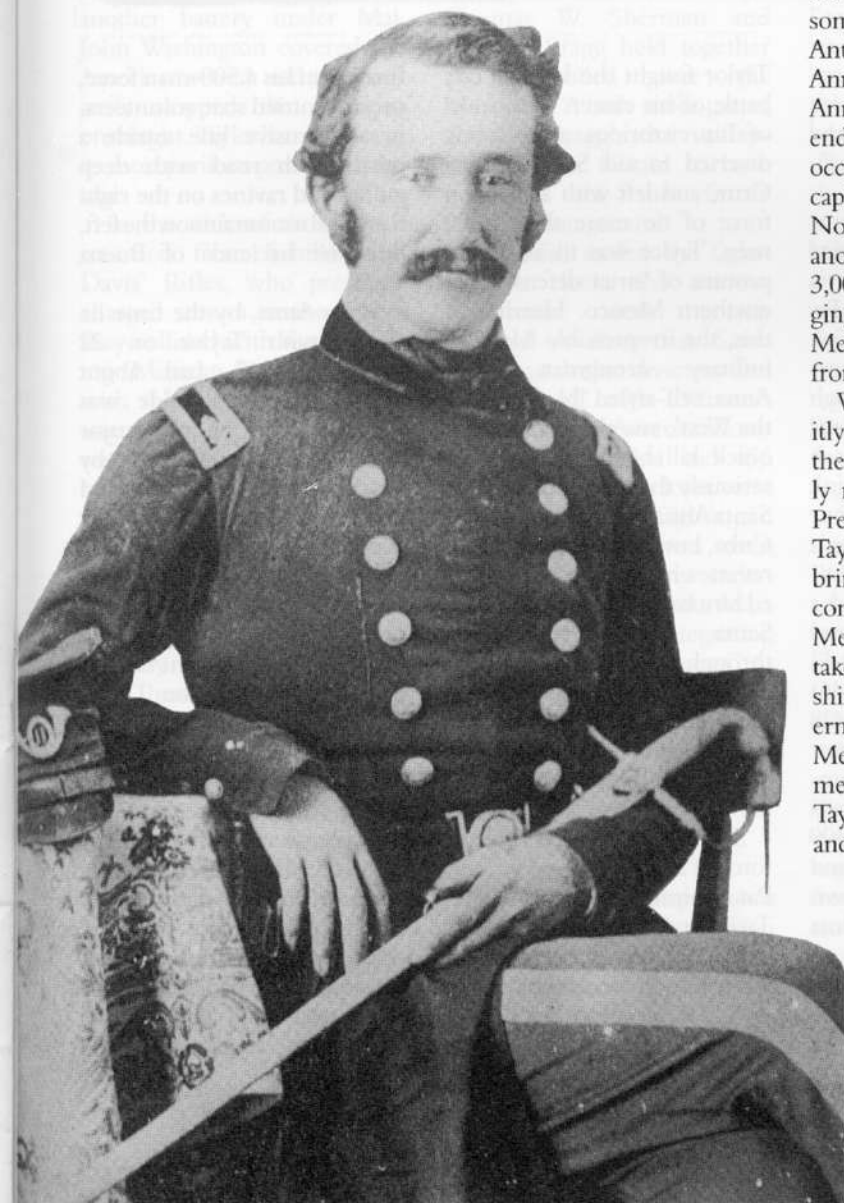
While the Mexicans had tacitly yielded northern Mexico to the Americans, they were hardly ready to give in altogether. President Polk decided that Taylor's successes could not bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion and that the Mexican capital city had to be taken. American emphasis shifted therefore from northern Mexico to the Vera Cruz-Mexico City corridor. This meant diverting most of Taylor's forces to the new sector and Taylor's assuming a defen-

sive posture in northern Mexico, which Polk ordered.

#### **Operations in California**

While Taylor had been marching toward Monterrey, a bizarre tale of intrigue and personal ambition was unfolding in California. A small force (63 men, all civilians) under US Army Capt. John C. Fremont<sup>(6)</sup> had penetrated California from the east several months before the war began, supposedly on a surveying expedition. At Fremont's instigation, American settlers in the territory revolted against the colonial government, which was already in factional disarray. This so-called 'Bear Flag Revolt' occurred at Sonoma in June 1846, shortly after the formal opening of hostilities down on the Rio Grande. Fremont declared himself governor of the 'Republic of California', and falsely suggested that he was acting on US authority. Meanwhile, US Navy Commodore John F. Sloat put a force ashore at Monterey (in California, not to be confused with the Monterrey in northern Mexico) and declared California US territory. He then sent naval expeditions to other key coastal settlements to claim them for the USA. The warring Californio factions put aside their differences in order to expel the detested Americans. Sloat, in ill health, was succeeded by Commodore Robert F. Stockton, who proclaimed an American regime in California with himself in charge. He appointed the chafing Fremont military governor in the north and another Yankee adventurer, US Marine Lt. Archibald Gillespie, military commander in the south. Meanwhile, the united Californios seized key points in the south and proclaimed their own regime. Into the middle of all this stepped US Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny in late November 1846.

Kearny had left Fort Leavenworth on the Missouri River the previous June with a force of 1,700 men. This tough little army traversed the Santa Fe Trail through modern New Mexico to claim the area for the US flag; then moved toward



*Lt. Col. John H. Savage, 11th US Infantry; this portrait illustrates very well the regulation fatigue dress of a regular officer. Note the regimental number in the curl of the bugle on his high-crowned cap. (Courtesy William Schultz, MD)*



'General Wool and Staff in the Calle Real, Saltillo', c.1847;  $\frac{1}{6}$  plate daguerreotype; courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth (P1981.65.22).

It is clear that an unidentified daguerrian artist was working in Mexico during 1847-48; various evidence suggests that this might possibly have been a Philadelphia photographer, J.H. William Smith, and that his work may have been collected by a West Point graduate, J.W.T. Gardiner of Maine, who served in Mexico. In 1981 50 of his plates were discovered in Connecticut, 38 of them made in Mexico; these include eight outdoor images of American troops which are the earliest known photographs of troops on active campaign. The collection is now at the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.

Wool is the figure in the caped overcoat, and the burly bearded officer at far right may be Irvin McDowell, who would achieve notoriety in the Civil War for losing the First Battle of Manassas. The officers are mostly dressed in regulation forage caps and dark blue frock coats, though one officer seems to wear a sack coat. Dragoon escorts are barely visible in the background.



California, aiming for the coast in order to consolidate US gains there. A disheartened Mexican force, reported to number 12,000, scamped away as Kearny approached Santa Fe. After taking Santa Fe peacefully, and hearing of the pacification of California, but not hearing of the subsequent revolt of the Californios, Kearny sent back his entire force save 100 dragoons, and marched on. He entered California in late November 1846. Learning of the Californios revolt, he defeated a Mexican force at San Pascual on 6 December, losing about 30% of his men. Joining forces, Stockton and Kearny led a 560-man army made up of dragoons, sailors, marines and volunteers northward toward Los Angeles to crush the Californios, which they accomplished in two clashes on the San Gabriel River on 8 and 9 January 1847. The Californios concluded the generous (to them) Treaty of Cahuenga with Fremont on 13 January 1847.

This left Stockton, Kearny, and Fremont to fight over which of the three had authority to establish an American government in California. Stockton bowed out when fresh instructions from Washington designated Kearny,

but Fremont refused to cooperate. The affair ended with Fremont's court martial and resignation from the service.<sup>(7)</sup>

#### **Doniphan's Expedition**

One of the most amazing campaigns of the War with Mexico was an offshoot of Kearny's expedition. As he left Santa Fe, Kearny dispatched Col. Alexander Doniphan, commander of an incredibly tough volunteer regiment of Missouri Mounted Rifles, to march south into Chihuahua to link up with Gen. Wool. In four months Doniphan's regiment crossed 3,000 miles of mountains and deserts, negotiated a treaty with Navajo chiefs, and defeated Mexican forces at El Brazito (25 December 1846) and at the Sacramento River (28 February 1847). In the latter engagement Doniphan supposedly killed 3,000 Mexicans and wounded another 300 while losing only one killed and eleven wounded of his own men. He entered Chihuahua on 1 March 1847.

#### **Battle of Buena Vista**

Shortly before this, Zachary

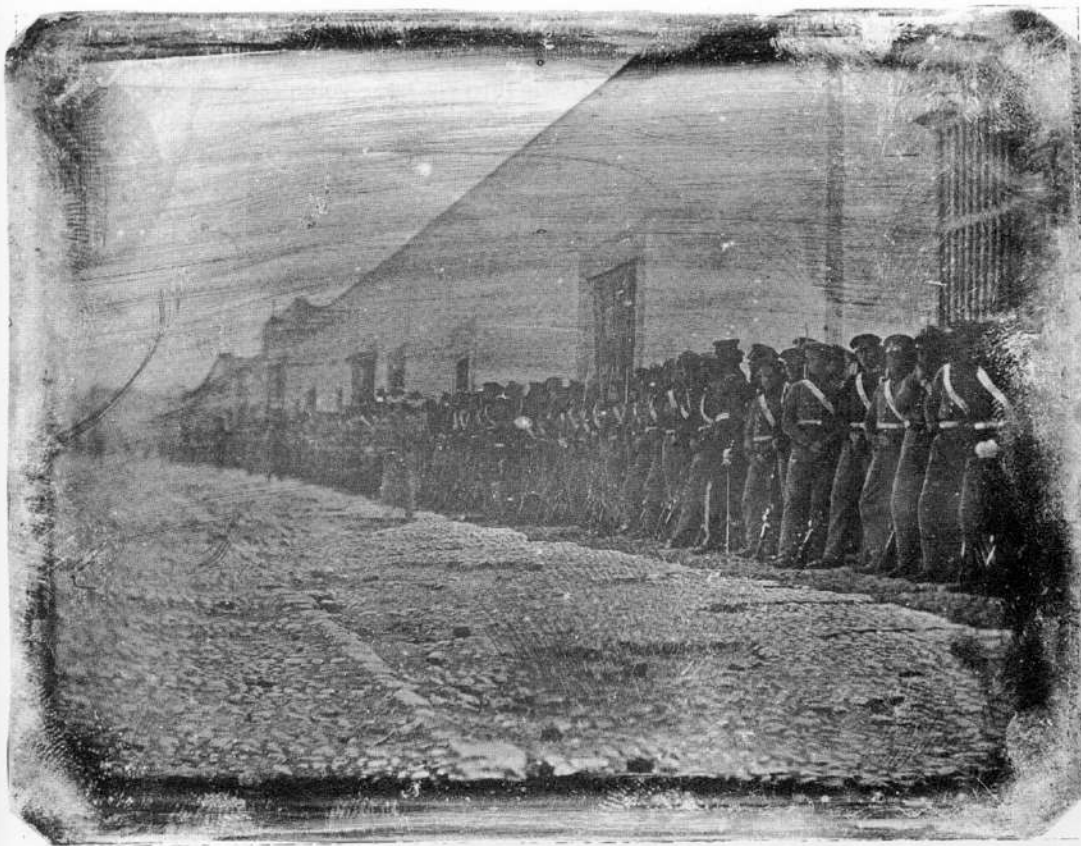
Taylor fought the last military battle of his career. With most of his victorious army being diverted to aid Scott at Vera Cruz, and left with a skeleton force of no more than 5,000 men, Taylor was to assume a posture of 'strict defensive' in northern Mexico. Hearing of this, the irrepressible Mexican military strongman Santa Anna, self-styled 'Napoleon of the West', saw the chance for a quick kill before Scott could seriously threaten Mexico City. Santa Anna had been in exile on Cuba, but after their battlefield reverses his countrymen invited him back. Polk acquiesced to Santa Anna's repatriation through the American blockade when Santa Anna pledged to initiate peace negotiations upon his return — a pledge he promptly repudiated once back in Mexico.

Santa Anna amassed a rag-tag force of 20,000 men at San Luis Potosi, aiming to destroy Taylor. Taylor, realizing that the best defence is a good offence, disregarded his orders and manoeuvred for the advantage to meet the on-coming Santa Anna. He

finally put his 4,500-man force, mostly untried state volunteers, in a defensive line astride a north-south road with deep gullies and ravines on the right flank and mountains on the left, near the hacienda of Buena Vista.

Santa Anna, by the time he closed with Taylor on 22 February 1847, had about 15,000 troops left. He was poised to fight the only major offensive action undertaken by the Mexicans in the war, and was about to score the closest thing to a Mexican victory in the entire conflict. Desultory skirmishing took place on the first day. That night the American general went back to Saltillo with Jefferson Davis' regiment of Mississippi Rifles<sup>(8)</sup> and some dragoons to see to American defences there. The next morning Santa Anna sent two divisions (7,000 men) against the left of the American line near Buena Vista. Two regiments of untried American volunteers gave way, and Mexican cavalry swept around the American left flank. Lt. J. P. J. O'Brien, commanding three





American infantry standing along street in Saltillo, c.1847;  $\frac{1}{8}$  plate daguerreotype; courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth (P1981.65.25).

Perhaps the most compelling of the outdoor scenes, this appears from various internal and external clues to show Virginia Regt. volunteers. Whoever the troops are, they appear to wear the standard US infantry fatigue uniform and accoutrements of the period. Generally volunteer units provided their own initial clothing, then drew US issue for replacements; they received their arms and accoutrements from US ordnance supplies from the start. A surviving bill of goods for the Virginia Regiment's first clothing indicates that they had adopted uniforms nearly identical to US regulation fatigues, though more fancily made (unlike US issue the Virginians' first jackets were made with body linings and wadding). This image could show those uniforms, since from the perspective shown linings and wadding would not be apparent.

The men in this view wear the M1839 forage cap, of dark blue woollen cloth with patent leather visor and chin straps. This hat had a fold-down flap in the back to cover the soldier's ears and the nape of his neck during bad weather. It was made stiff and puffed out in the crown with horsehair wadding, which the soldiers often removed in order to achieve a more rakish air.

From what can be distinguished of the jackets in this view, they appear to conform to the US infantry fatigue jacket adopted in the early 1830s. It was made of sky-blue kersey, with small white metal buttons bearing the US eagle. The collars and epaulettes would be trimmed in white worsted wool lace. Trousers would be fly-front, of matching kersey. Sergeants and corporals would have white worsted chevrons, points up, on both sleeves, and matching stripes on the outside trouser seams. Sergeants would also wear the US M1840 non-commissioned officers' sword on a white buff shoulder sling, and a red worsted waist sash. The suspensory equipment evident in this view would be the M1839 black leather cartridge box, with an oval brass US plate on the flap, suspended on a white buff shoulder strap, with a round brass eagle breast plate. The waistbelt, also M1839, was of white buff with an oval brass US plate and a black leather bayonet scabbard on white buff frog. The men's arms are most likely the M1816 flintlock musket.

A company officer is discernible about a third of the way in from the right hand edge of the plate. He wears the prescribed forage cap and fatigue frock coat of dark blue cloth with shoulder straps. His trousers would be sky-blue with a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. white cloth stripe.

small field guns, was forced to abandon the smallest, a 4-pdr., and withdraw his two 6-pdrs.; another battery under Maj. John Washington covered the American retreat and momentarily stopped the Mexican onslaught. Taylor's army was in its most perilous position of the war.

In the nick of time Taylor returned from Saltillo with Davis' Rifles, who promptly charged into a ravine where they collided with the onrushing Mexican cavalry. Armed with short but deadly percussion rifles<sup>(9)</sup>, Davis' men mowed down Mexican lancers 'as ripe grain falls before the reaper'. Arkansas cavalry and Indiana infantry helped save the American left. The Indians and Mississippians next formed an open 'V' into which Mexican infantry and cavalry rushed, then hesitated; suddenly the Americans volleyed at 80 yards, and shattered the Mexicans.

His assault on the American left stalled, Santa Anna sent another division against the American centre. Here the American line held due to heroic use of artillery at musket range. Once again O'Brien's battery performed valuable service, but most of the batterymen and horses

were hit and the remaining guns lost to the Mexicans. Other batteries under Capt. Thomas W. Sherman and Braxton Bragg held together and prevailed over the Mexicans. 'A little more grape, Captain Bragg', the unflappable Taylor is said to have requested of the future Confederate general.

Nightfall ended the fighting. At dawn the anxious Americans were greatly relieved to find that Santa Anna had declared victory and marched off with O'Brien's three cannons. American losses were 267 killed and 456 wounded; Mexican losses were estimated at 1,500. Fighting in northern Mexico was over, with the Americans indisputably in control. Santa Anna dragged his disintegrating army back to Mexico City, where the 'Napoleon of the West' took the oath of office as President of Mexico and turned his attention to the oncoming Scott.

#### **From Vera Cruz to Mexico City**

Winfield Scott's campaign on Mexico City would establish him as one of the most successful field commanders in American military history. A veteran of the War of 1812 and

fond of military pomp and ceremony, Scott was known by his troops as 'Old Fuss and Feathers'. His career would last into the Civil War; and it was he, though subsequently pushed out by younger rivals, who conceived the Union's ultimately successful strategy in the latter conflict. His exploits in the Mexican War brought him many laurels. Starting with an amphibious landing and ending victoriously with capture of the Mexican capital, Scott's success amazed even the notoriously hard-to-impress Wellington, who pronounced the American 'the greatest living soldier'.

Scott, like Taylor, had his share of rearguard skirmishes. Polk mistrusted him; he received barely half the 20,000 men promised him; and he was bedevilled with logistical problems. Nevertheless, he put ashore in Mexico at Comargo on 3 January 1847 and later established headquarters at Tampico, where local authorities acquiesced to American supervision. At this location Scott began amassing his invasion force. Mexico City was nearly 240 miles into the interior. Access was via the National Road from the coastal city of Vera Cruz, dominated by the



most powerful fortress in the Western Hemisphere, San Juan de Ulua, garrisoned by 5,000 Mexican troops.

A seaborne assault on Vera Cruz was unthinkable. So Scott designed and ordered ingenious wooden landing craft, in three successive sizes so that they could be shipped to him in space-saving stacks. With these, and US naval co-operation from Commodore Conner, Scott landed his entire army unopposed in early March 1847 at Anton Lizardo, 12 miles south of Vera Cruz.

The Americans' worst

enemy here was not Mexicans, but sickness. Smallpox immediately broke out, and the season of yellow fever, ('el vomito', the black vomit) was about to descend upon the miasmatic Mexican lowlands. Scott aimed, as soon as possible, to pacify Vera Cruz and hit the National Highway for the more healthful highlands of the interior. A combined land and sea bombardment achieved the first objective by the end of March (American losses: 19 killed, 73 wounded; Mexican losses: roughly 180 soldiers and civilians). By early April 1847

Scott was marching westward on the National Highway.

At Cerro Gordo (literally 'fat mountain') Scott with 9,000 confronted Santa Anna with 13,000. US engineer officers (including Capt. Robert E. Lee and George B. McClellan) performed valuable reconnaissance work, but a premature and poorly led action on the Americans' part (17 April 1847) negated much of the advantage. The culprit here was Tennessee Democrat Gideon J. Pillow, a politically appointed general of volunteers, and a very poor leader. Nevertheless, the 'grin-

gos'<sup>(10)</sup> carried the mountain the next day; and a force of Illinois volunteers, by one account, actually surprised Santa Anna and his entourage about to feast on a lunch of roast chicken. Santa Anna's aides hoisted the general (minus his American-made cork leg, which replaced the real one shot off by a French cannon ball in an 1830s conflict known as the Pastry War) on to one of his carriage mules and made off with him. The Illinoisians captured his carriage complete with gold treasure, lunch and leg (the Illinois National Guard still has the latter); and the Americans went on to win the battle, capturing 204 Mexican officers, 2,837 men, 43 cannon and 4,000 small arms, at a cost of 63 dead and 337 wounded.

Scott continued towards Mexico City, occupying Jalapa, Perote, and Puebla, the last city only 80 miles from the capital, by mid-May. At this point the short-term enlistments of many of his volunteers expired and his force was reduced to 7,000, 1,200 of whom were sick. So the American general settled down at Puebla to rest and recruit. He was at this point totally cut off from his bases of supply. 'I resolved... to render



'Colonel Hamtramck, Virginia Volunteers', c.1847; 1/4 plate daguerreotype; courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth (P1981.65.3).

Col. John Francis Hamtramck, commander of the Virginia Regiment. He wears the prescribed forage cap with infantry bugle surrounding what may be a letter 'V'. Instead of the double-breasted frock coat authorized for regimental officers on fatigue, Hamtramck wears the single-breasted version of company officers, a practice evident in other photographs of regimental officers. The coat would be of dark blue superfine woollen broadcloth. He also wears a red silk sash, and his weapon is an ornate non-regulation sword.

A contemporary described Hamtramck as vain and taken with military pomposity. When his regiment was relieved of duty in Mexico he was the first one out of the country, leaving his men to shift for themselves. His regiment was known for its discipline and military bearing; one observer commented, 'both officers and men were distinguished for their high-toned, gentlemanly bearing, while the regiment bore a most deserved character for efficiency'. Col. Hamtramck and his regiment joined Wool at Saltillo in the summer of 1847.



my little army a *self-sustaining machine*.' He even contracted Mexicans to provide his army uniforms! By August, his numbers were back up over 10,000.

Crossing the last mountain barrier, Scott entered the Valley of Mexico on 7 August 1847. Santa Anna had assembled another force of 20,000 in the vicinity of Contreras and Churubusco. A 3,300-man American force stormed the heights of Contreras on 19 and 20 August 1847, routing the enemy, killing 700 and capturing 800 at a loss of 60 killed and wounded. The Americans also recaptured O'Brien's two 6-pdrs. lost at Buena Vista. Fighting at Churubusco, a church and convent converted into a strong fort, on 20 August 1847 resulted in over 1,000 American losses but cost the Mexicans seven times that number.

Santa Anna withdrew westward and requested an armistice so that the Mexican government could consider peace overtures sent by Polk.

While Scott punctiliously observed the terms of the armistice by not manoeuvring his army, Santa Anna blatantly ignored it, recruiting and manoeuvring his forces. On September 1847 the Mexican government rejected Polk's terms. Scott put his army in motion towards Mexico City the next day, ordering Gen. William J. Worth to take about 3,500 men on a diversionary assault against the site of a supposed ordnance foundry, Molino del Rey, that was rumoured to be casting church bells into cannon. The Molino was fortified and garrisoned by 12,000 Mexicans, so what was

to be a raid developed into a serious day-long battle. The Americans took the positions (which turned out not to be casting cannon) at a cost of 117 dead and 653 wounded; the Mexicans lost about 2,700 killed, wounded and captured. The Americans withdrew from the Molino that night.

#### Mexico City

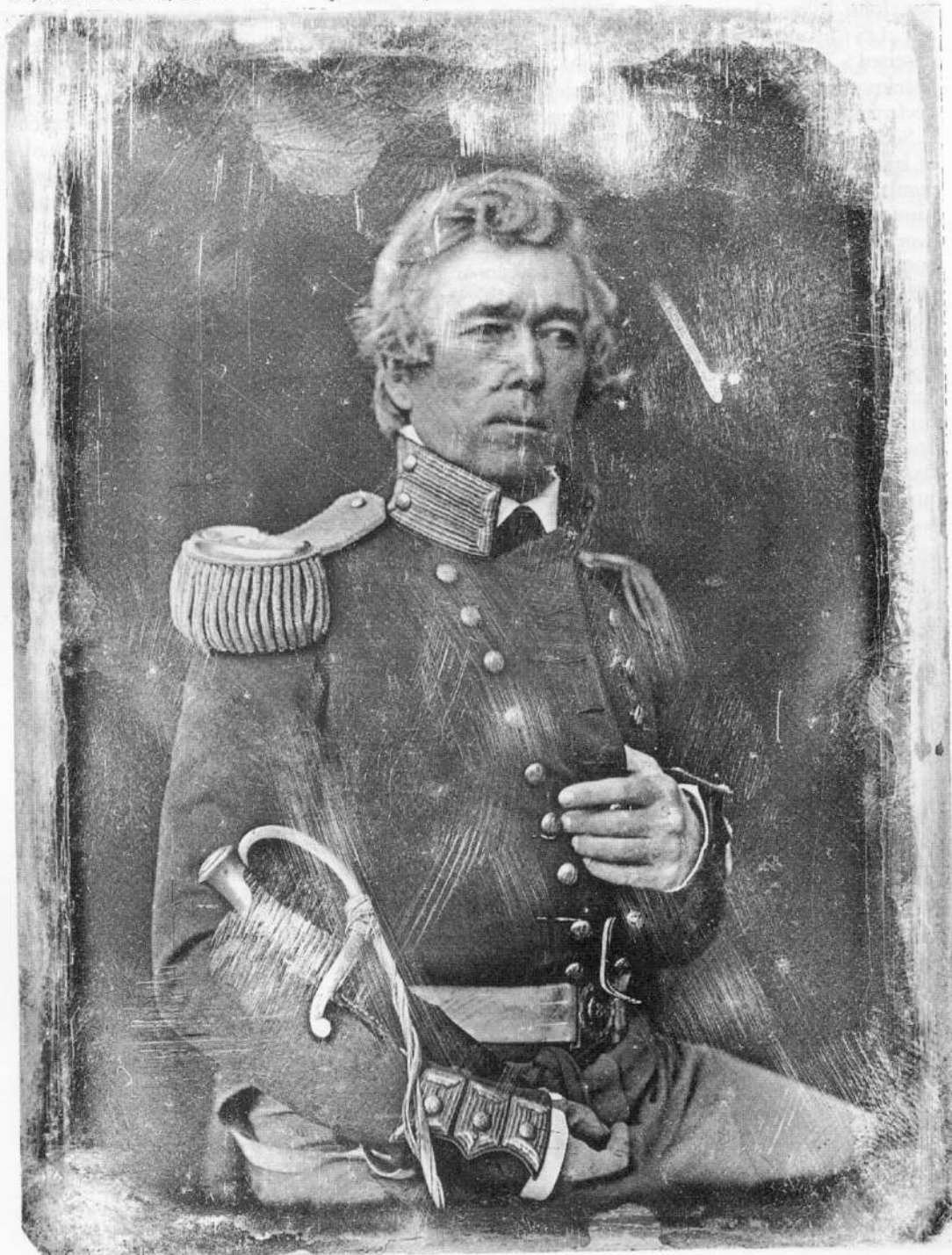
The capital was defended naturally by swampy land, which the defenders purposefully flooded at Scott's advance; the city was approachable by a spoke-like system of raised defended causeways. Relying on advice from his engineers, particularly R. E. Lee, Scott

flanked to the south of the city and approached it from the west. He had fewer than 8,000 men, Santa Anna a garrison of 15,000. Scott's objectives were the San Cosme and Belen gates on the western outskirts of the city, but to reach them he had to pass by the hilltop fortress of Chapultepec, which had perhaps 5,000 defenders. Scott bombarded Chapultepec throughout 12 September 1847, then sent two divisions up its rock slopes with pickaxes and ladders the next morning. Stiff resistance was offered by, amongst others, 'Los Ninos', the boy cadets of the Mexican Military College; nevertheless

'Maj. Washington, Chief of Artillery', c. 1847;  $\frac{1}{4}$  plate daguerreotype; courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth (P1981.65.4).

Maj. John Macrae Washington was a regular officer and chief of Taylor's artillery in Mexico. A kinsman of the first President, Washington had directed effective battery fire against Santa Anna's failed assault on the American left at Buena Vista. Washington wears the regulation dress uniform of a captain of artillery (as a major, he was authorized four lace loops on his cuffs). His coat would be dark blue broadcloth with gold bullion lace and epaulettes, the coat trimmed and lined in red. His trousers would be sky-blue cloth with welted-edge  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. red cloth stripes. His cap, not shown, would be a  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in. high cylinder of black beaver felt with patent leather visor and trim; on the front would be a gilt eagle and crossed cannons, and a plume of red feathers. Washington survived the war. In 1853, in transit from the east to the west coast of the US, he and four other officers and 180 soldiers of the 3rd US Artillery were swept overboard in a gale and lost at sea.

All of the mystery photographer's work is published, with detailed commentary, in Martha A. Sandweiss, et al., *Eyewitness to War: Prints and Daguerreotypes of the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (Washington: Smithsonian Press, 1989), pp. 179-210. Six of the more interesting outdoor views are published in David Nevin, *The Mexican War* (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1978), pp. 90-95.





the summit was in American hands by 9.30 a.m. The Belen gate fell after noon and the San Cosme gate in the evening. US losses were 130 killed, 703 wounded, and 29 missing.

In a dramatic demi-climax to the assault on Chapultepec, several dozen US deserters met grisly ends as the hilltop fortress changed hands. Captured by US troops at Churubusco, these men had been fighting under a shamrock banner and the name 'San Patricio Battalion' against their former comrades since the Battle of Buena Vista, where Santa Anna had cited them for bravery. Their leader was an Irishman, Sgt. John Riley, Company K, 5th US Infantry, who had deserted Taylor's army at Matamoros before the formal declaration of war.

Seduced by Mexican offers of land and money, other US regulars, mostly of non-American stock, had trickled over to the Mexican side. Riley, now a lieutenant, commanded the San Patricios, who never really numbered more than two full companies. They were reportedly among the hardest-fighting soldiers in the Mexican army, for they well knew their fate if captured. In fact, it was said that at Churubusco they forestalled Mexican capitulation for some time for that reason; but at least 65 of them were taken alive. Tried by court martial, all were condemned to death. Scott pardoned four who convinced him they had merely been captured and forced to fight. He commuted the sentences of about a dozen more, including Riley, on the grounds that they deserted before the formal declaration of war. For the reprieved, punishments were grim enough: 50 lashes, branding on the cheek with a 'D', and grave-digging detail for their less fortunate comrades. The latter were to hang in three shifts. The men of the first shift were arrayed in mule wagons with nooses around their necks, in plain sight of the hill on which stood Chapultepec. From this perspective of dubious vantage they watched the American assault. As the Mexican flag was lowered and the American flag raised the

muleteers spurred their animals, leaving the San Patricios dancing on air. The second and third shifts joined the dancing in short order.

With 6,000 effectives left after securing the Belen and San Cosme gates, the Americans used axes and crow-bars to hack through the walls of Mexico City, finally entering it on the morning of 14 September 1847. A battalion of US Marines took over the National Palace, celebrated in the US Marine Hymn as 'the Halls of Montezuma', later that day. Scott proclaimed a military government and within a few days had the population of 200,000 under control.

Santa Anna had slipped out of the city and went north to Guadalupe Hidalgo, where he renounced the presidency — then took the 8,000 men left to him to pounce on a garrison of 2,300 convalescent Americans at Puebla. At this he failed, the siege ending on 12 October 1847 when an American relief force arrived from Vera Cruz. By then Santa Anna had been deposed as head of the army and had fled the country<sup>(1)</sup>. While vicious guerrilla fighting continued along the American lifeline to the sea, the war with Mexico was effectively over, and the United States victorious.

#### **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo**

Polk's envoy Nicholas Trist came to terms with the new Mexican president, Manuel Pénay Pénay, under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Mexico ceded Texas above the Rio Grande to the US, and also California and New Mexico. Trist committed the US to compensate Mexico with \$15 million (\$10 million less than Polk had offered before the war), and also to agree to assume more than \$3 million in claims by US citizens against Mexico. The territorial cession added about 1.2 million square miles to US territory (further augmented by another 30,000 square miles purchased from Mexico in 1853) and brought the country very nearly to its present continental configuration, minus Alaska.

The treaty was subsequently

ratified, and the last US troops in Mexico departed Vera Cruz in August 1848.

\* \* \*

The Mexican War was, in the opinion of one particularly well-qualified historian, the hardest war experienced by American soldiers<sup>(2)</sup>. One in eight died — 13,780 out of 104,000. The tropical climate in which much of the campaigning occurred was devastating to a soldiery bred in temperate climes; the privations suffered by the men who marched with Taylor to Matamoros, with Wool to Parras, with Doniphan to Chihuahua and Kearny to California, beggar the modern imagination. The suffering of Mexican troops was scarcely less. Though native to the climate, many of them were hastily drafted (some out of prisons), ill-equipped, untrained, and — perhaps most tragic of all — led by an officer corps severely flawed by greed and political ambition.

The War with Mexico is seen by many historians as a blot on America's past — a war of blatant expansionism at the expense of a weak but sovereign neighbouring nation. This view may be tempered, however, by observing that political institutions, like nature, abhor a vacuum. Mexican rule of the ceded lands certainly represented a vacuum, and into that void inevitably rushed the vibrant and dynamic American socio-political juggernaut of the mid-19th century.

MI

#### **Notes**

(1) So named for Andrew Jackson, the Tennessee Democrat who served as president 1831-1839. 'Old Hickory', a veteran of the Revolution and hero of the Battle of New Orleans (1815), was the first frontier-reared, non-aristocratic chief executive. His political ascendancy coincided with the break-up of the old Whiggish hegemony under which only property owners voted and only the refined classes achieved high office.

(2) Taylor died in office and was succeeded by his Vice President, Millard Fillmore.

(3) At least this has been the traditional view. A recent work by Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* (New Haven and London, 1989), argues that the Americans never

exploited the long range capabilities of rifled weapons during the Civil War and may as well have used smoothbores.

(4) Though the Americans fielded perhaps twice the number of troops as the Mexicans during the war, the exigencies of sustaining long-march offensives deep in enemy territory, with the necessity of leaving garrisons along the lines of march, meant that the Americans always had fewer troops at the points of contact with Mexican forces.

(5) Ampudia was a crass opportunist of Cuban origin. His reputation for cruelty was enhanced in 1844 when he executed an opponent and had his head boiled in oil and placed in a glass jar, the better for Ampudia to display the grisly trophy.

(6) Fremont was the son-in-law of Missouri's powerful pro-Polk, pro-Manifest Destiny Democratic Senator, Thomas Hart Benton. Fremont was head-strong and fiercely ambitious; but his reach exceed his grasp.

(7) He would re-surface in 1858 as the Republican party's first (unsuccessful) presidential candidate, and again during the Civil War as one of the Union army's more pitiful generals.

(8) Davies, as a young West Point graduate years before, had courted Taylor's daughter, incurring Taylor's wrath; 'Old Rough and Ready' did not want a daughter of his married to a soldier! When Davis resigned his commission Taylor relented, but Knox Taylor Davis died of malaria seven weeks after her marriage.

(9) The US model 1841 rifle, which has, ever since the Battle of Buena Vista, been known as the 'Mississippi Rifle'.

(10) A derogatory Mexican word for Americans, dating from the time of this war. There are many fanciful explanations as to its origins, including its being a corruption of 'green coats', which the Americans supposedly wore (actually it was certain Mexican cavalry regiments who wore green coats); and that it came from the first two words of the then-popular American song 'Green Grow the Lilacs'. South American acquaintances of the author report that the term is simply an old Spanish word for foreigner.

(11) Santa Anna proved to possess remarkable skills of self-preservation. In 1853 he was inaugurated president again, for two and a half years, then exiled. He visited New York in 1866, completed his memoirs in 1874, and died peacefully in Mexico City in 1876.

(12) John S. D. Eisenhower, *So Far From God: The US War With Mexico, 1846-1848* (New York, 1989), pp. 370-371.



# Silent Witness

## The German Infantry Tunic of a 1914 Casualty

JOHN A. HALL

Among those items which occasionally surface to illustrate the bloody nature of the Great War, few, in this author's opinion, are as graphic, or as interesting to collectors and historians alike, as a tunic and an associated *triage* label presently in a private collection in Pennsylvania. Not only is the tunic one of the extraordinarily rare experimental German enlisted man's field grey tunics issued in 1908; but the attached label allows us to uncover the story of a German officer who died of wounds in November 1914. The author would like to thank Richard Keller, the present custodian of these remarkable pieces, for his co-operation.

### THE TUNIC

This field grey tunic, manufactured in 1908, is one of the prototypes of the style which was to be known as the Model 1910. These had been manufactured in extremely limited numbers and issued experimentally to a handful of units as early as 1908. This particular tunic is quite possibly unique, and is believed to be the only surviving documented example of a sergeant's tunic from these extraordinarily rare prototypes.

This tunic, though in many ways identical to the standard issue 1910 pattern, is significantly different in the style of lace (*Tresse*) used to distinguish rank on both collar and cuff. Whereas the 1910 pattern was to have narrow dull grey lace, this prototype retains the old-style wide gold metallic lace as used on the *dunkelblau* (dark blue) uniform tunics. This interim practice has never been documented before, and reflects the experimental nature of this tunic.

The tunic is made from a very heavy, smooth, field-grey wool cloth, which has almost a felt-like texture, with a white-over-grey cotton lining. It has a turn-down collar, Brandenburg cuffs, scalloped rear skirt-flaps, and is piped in scarlet. It has loops on the shoulders to accommodate slip-on shoulder straps, but the straps them-

selves are missing. The brass Bavarian lion buttons are gold-washed, again suggesting that, as with the rank lace, they were taken from the existing dark blue uniform, as 1910 pattern tunics were much more likely to have brass, nickel or tombak buttons. Overall this prototype tunic gives the impression of being of extremely high quality — certainly considerably better than any of the standard issue 1910 pattern tunics that this author has encountered.

The tunic has a number of ink stamps inside the lining. The first, 'B.A.II. 1908', indicates that the tunic was issued in that year by the *Bekleidungsamt* (Clothing Department) of the Second Army Corps. The stamp '18.J.R.' indicates the 18th Infantry Regiment. Though Bavarian units were frequently identified with a 'B' (eg. B.18.J.R.), in this instance these stamps refer to the Bavarian Infantry Regiment Nr.18, Prinz Ludwig Ferdinand, whose home district was Landau. This regiment was part of the Second Bavarian Army Corps which covered the Lower Franconia region, and was headquartered in Würzburg. The third, somewhat fainter stamp, 'E.B.', would have been added when the

tunic was issued to an *Ersatzbataillon*, probably when it was reissued in 1914.

The tunic shows graphic evidence of war service. A hole, approximately two inches by one inch, has been punctured just below the right hip, and there is extensive blood staining to much of the lining. From the way that the blood has flowed it appears that the soldier lay on his stomach after he was hit.

### THE TRIAGE LABEL

Attached to one of the buttons of the tunic is a triage label made from thin brown card. Such labels were used at field dressing stations to record personal details of the wounded man, a description of his wounds, and notes from the attending doctor about how the casualty should be treated. This particular label, written in a barely decypherable *Sütterlin*-schrift scrawl in pencil, reads as follows:

*Oberleutnant d. Res.*

*Boxheimer, Hans*

*8/5 Inf. Res. Rgt.*

*Schuss rechte Brust*

*Linke Seite Brustschuss*

*Verbandwechsel nach Bedarf*

*Nicht transportfähig*

*Schwer beschädigt*

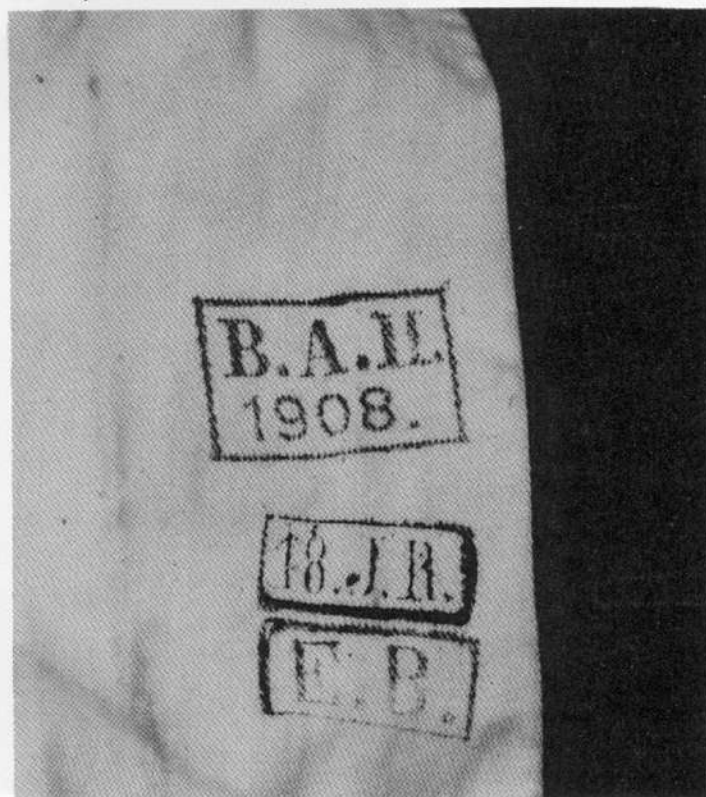
Oberleutnant Boxheimer, of Company 8 of the 5th Bavarian Infantry Regiment, was clearly severely wounded, shot both in

the left and the right chest. The doctor notes that his bandages should be changed as necessary, but that the wounded man was too badly injured to be moved. Research of the surviving regimental and military records in the Wehrgeschichtliches Museum in Rastatt and the Bavarian Military Archives has uncovered the full story of the life and death of this German officer.

### Johann Boxheimer

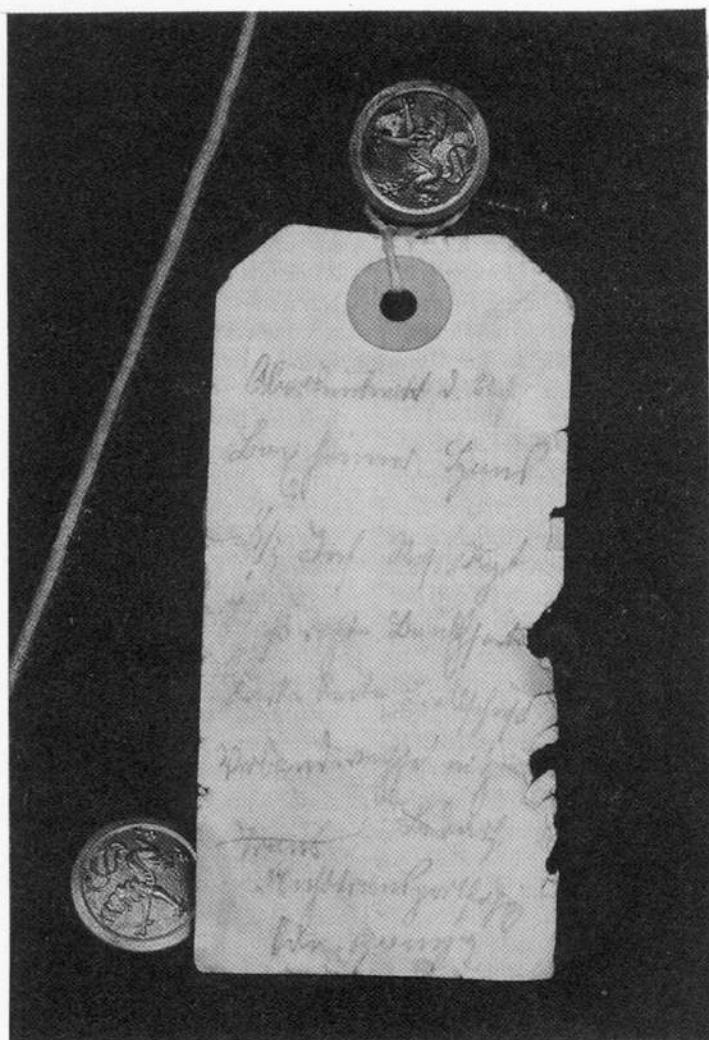
Born in Abenheim near Worms on 29 January 1877, Johann Georg Boxheimer was the son of a prosperous landowner and vintner. He studied at the Gymnasium in Worms before attending the universities of Würzburg, Berlin and Giessen. He became a successful lawyer in Ludwigshafen am Rhein. He never married.

Boxheimer began his association with the military while still an undergraduate at the age of 20, when he became a so-called *Einjährigfreiwilliger* — a one-year volunteer. These were young men of good education, usually undergraduates, who clothed, fed and equipped themselves during their period of military service. Upon meeting stringent standards and passing a special examination, they were permitted to transfer to the Reserve as *Offizier-Aspiranten*. After two annual



*Ink stamps on the lining of the left breast of the tunic, explained in the text.*





Close-up of the triage label referring to the mortally wounded Oberleutnant Boxheimer — though almost illegible, the notes are translated in the text herewith. Too badly injured to be moved, he almost certainly died in some corner of the field dressing station, wrapped for warmth in the discarded tunic of a sergeant who had earlier been treated for a hip wound.

training periods, and passing another set of examinations, they were commissioned in the Reserve of Officers. While in the Reserves they were liable to be called up for three annual training periods of between four and eight weeks.

Boxheimer successfully passed the examinations, and was commissioned a Leutnant der Reserve in the 9th Bavarian Infantry Regiment in late 1903. He took part in three training periods, in 1904, 1906 and 1908, before being transferred to the Landwehr in 1910, becoming an Oberleutnant the following year.

With the outbreak of war in August 1914, Boxheimer left his law practice and was appointed company commander of the 1st Company of the Replacement Battalion of the 5th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment. On 1 October 1914 he arrived on the Western Front with a draft of men from the Replacement Battalion, and was made company commander of the 8th Company of the 5th Bavarian Reserve Infantry

Regiment.

Boxheimer quickly made a reputation for himself as a courageous officer in the heavy fighting near Montanban, 6-23 October, and at Ypres, 30 October, until he was mortally wounded on 11 November 1914. The regimental diary, the original handwritten copy of which is in the Bayerisches Kriegsarchiv in Munchen, outlines the events surrounding Boxheimer's death. In weather described as being so cold that the men's food froze solid, the regiment took part in a 'dashing advance' against 'the enemy houses of Capellerie where we captured about fifty prisoners. During the attack we lost a brave Company Commander, Oberleutnant of the Landwehr Boxheimer, who was brought back severely wounded and who died a few days later in the field hospital at Comines.'

### CONCLUSIONS

So how is it that the label and tunic came to be associated? The tunic, after all, is that of a sergeant, with a hole suggestive

of a wound on the right hip, while the label describes an officer shot twice in the chest. There seem to be a number of possible explanations, though at this point we can only speculate. There is, however, a strong case to be made that the tunic and label have been united since 11 November 1914.

The tunic is unit-marked to Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 18, Prinz Ludwig Ferdinand, part of the II Bayerisches Armeekorps, and was issued on an experimental basis to that unit in 1908. The triage label is to an officer of the 5th Reserve Infantry Regiment, was also part of the II Bayerisches Armeekorps. At the outbreak of war in August 1914 the clothing department of each Army Corps was faced with the daunting task of providing uniforms for each of the Reserve and Ersatz (supplementary) soldiers who were mobilised. It was perfectly reasonable that stores of previously issued uniforms — including the 1910 pattern prototypes which had been experimentally distributed in 1908 — would be brought back out of storage and issued once again. It seems likely that this tunic was one such reissue — explaining the 'E.B.' (Ersatz Battalion) stamp — given perhaps to a soldier sent as a replacement to the 5th Reserve Infantry Regiment in 1914.

So how did the tunic and label become united? There seem to be three plausible explanations. First, that Boxheimer wore the sergeant's tunic to hide the fact that he was an officer, a practice that some officers were already adopting by November 1914. This seems unlikely, however, as the wounds described on the triage label do not match the hole in the tunic. Second, that the triage ticket was tied to the sergeant's jacket in the field hospital for some unknown reason, and the jacket was never

associated with Boxheimer. This is also possible, but unlikely.

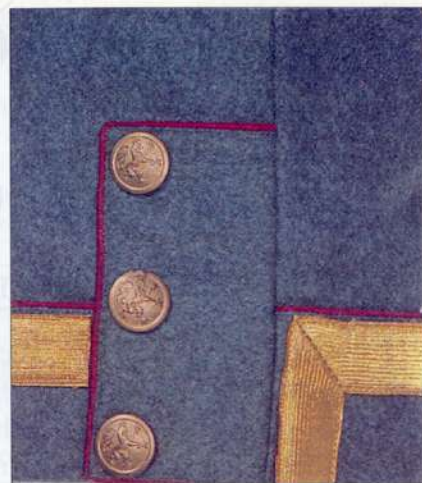
The most likely scenario, as supported by the evidence, is as follows: Oberleutnant Boxheimer was seriously wounded on the morning of 11 November 1914, shot twice in the chest. The weather around Ypres that day was, as the regimental diary attests, freezing, and it is likely that Boxheimer was in shock: both good reasons for keeping the patient warm. Perhaps, also, his own tunic was cut off him so that the doctor could more readily examine his chest wounds. Overwhelmed by the scale of casualties, and short of blankets, it was common for patients in field hospitals to be covered with any tunics or coats that could be found, including those of men who had died or who had had to be stripped to be treated. This tunic, therefore, was quite likely taken from a pile of discarded uniforms, and was used as a makeshift blanket to cover the dying officer. It would make sense, in this case, for Boxheimer's triage label to be tied to this tunic, even though it was not his own. It is also quite likely that after he died the tunic and label were sent with his surviving personal possessions to his elderly mother, who was still living in Abenheim.

All over Europe similar small packages, many containing bloody scraps of uniforms like this, were being sent to the next-of-kin of officers. Officers, unlike their men, personally purchased their uniforms, and it was believed that all private possessions should be returned to the families. It was not until later in the war that it was finally decided that this policy needed to be amended, as on more than one occasion, tragically, the bloody uniform had arrived before any notification that the man had been killed.

### Acknowledgements:

The author would like to thank the staff of the Wehrgeschichtliches Museum in Rastatt, in particular Oberstleutnant Uwe-Peter Böhm; Edward Parker; Annette Steigerwald; and Philip J. Haythornthwaite Esq.





Front and rear full length views of the prototype tunic, still with the triage label attached; note wound entry hole on right hip in rear view. The close-ups show the Brandenburg cuff, with gold-washed Bavarian lion buttons and metallic gold rank lace which would have been taken from the dark blue uniform which was standard issue in 1908; and a portion of the interior of the right skirt, showing lining materials.



# His Majesty's Canadian Regiment of Fencible Infantry 1803-16(3)

ROBERT HENDERSON

The first two parts of this article ('MP' Nos.37 & 38) covered the history, and uniforms and equipment, of this Canadian regiment of the War of 1812. This concluding part covers the re-creation of the unit by Canadian re-enactors in the 1980s; and provides a few more of the photographs of the re-created regiment used to illustrate this series, which confirm the high standard of costume and equipment achieved.

In 1984 a group of military history enthusiasts from Eastern Ontario decided to re-create a Canadian corps from the War of 1812. Because of the role it played during this crucial time in Canada's history, the Canadian Regiment of Fencible Infantry proved to be the favoured choice. The group was adopted as a project of the Museum of Applied Military History, a Canadian organization of groups re-enacting periods from the Seven Years War to World War II. The Museum's purpose is to preserve and promote Canada's military history by 'living education'.

From its beginnings, the goal of the re-created Canadian Fencibles was to accurately portray the life of the Canadian regular in British service in the summer of 1812, thereby bringing greater awareness and understanding of that period to Canadians. Since eight of the ten companies of the Canadian Fencible Regiment were battalion companies the group decided to depict a battalion company.

Many re-enactment groups, when founded, tend to be top heavy: they misrepresent the number of officers and NCOs compared with the rank and file. Recognising this problem, the re-created Canadian Fencibles chose, for its first three years, to have only musketmen. Limited stratification began in 1988 when numbers and obvious historical reasons

justified the creation (by election) of non-commissioned officers. Presently, the 30 — member Canadian Fencibles consists of:

- 1 Sergeant
- 2 Corporals
- 1 Lance Corporal
- 2 Drummers
- 24 Privates

The regiment's policy continues to be to avoid the addition of commissioned officers to its ranks until numbers justify. This has created a peculiar problem for the group. At most re-enactments the group parades with a stand of colours, and historically the colours of a regiment were carried by subaltern officers. In order to maintain the current stratification policy while preserving historical accuracy, 'gentlemen volunteers' were created (clothed in the uniform of the ranks) to carry the colours. On the permission of the commander of the forces in America, a gentleman could enter the ranks of a regiment as a 'volunteer'. This improved the gentleman's chances for an appointment into an officer vacancy. Returns for the summer of 1812 show two volun-

teers on the strength of the Canadian Fencibles.

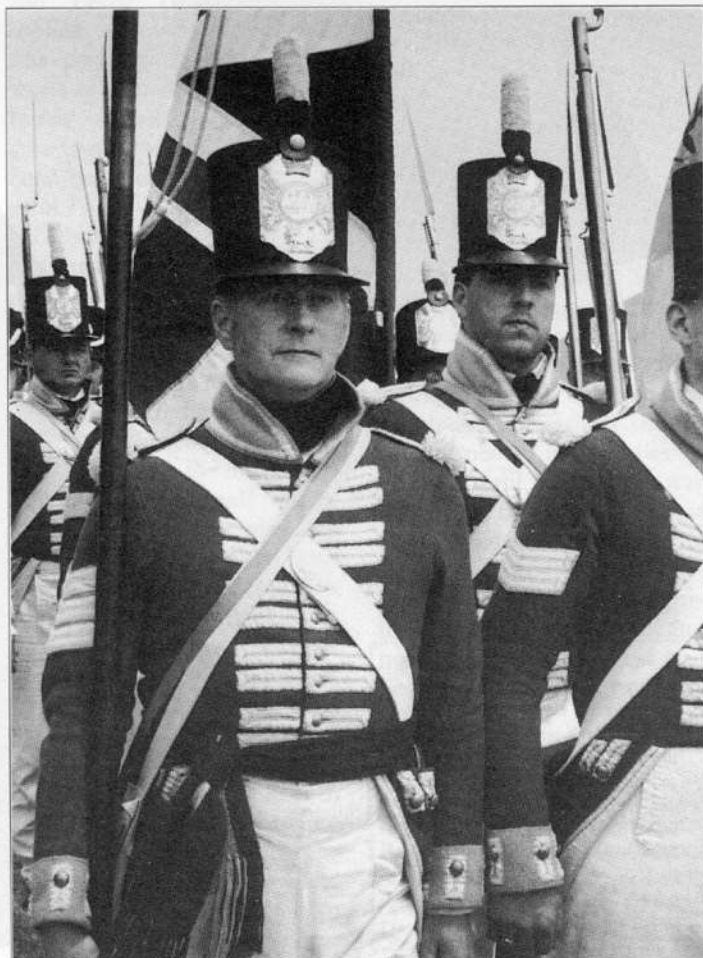
The re-created Canadian Fencibles' ranks are a cross-section of Canadian society. The ethnic composition is strikingly similar to the original: there are musketmen of English, Scottish and Irish descent. There is a large percentage of French Canadians or of French Canadian descent in the group. In addition, there is a 'foreign' element of American expatriates and others from the United States, as well as members of German and Finnish descent. The group includes teachers, historians, curators, career military personnel, bureaucrats, professional military modellers, and other history enthusiasts drawn mainly from Ottawa and Toronto, Ontario.

## COSTUME AND EQUIPMENT

As with any re-enactment group, procuring the 'clothing, arms and accoutrements on the same footing with line regiments' has been as difficult as for the original. The regiment has, however, gradually

secured suppliers for such necessities as universal shako plates, wool lace, madder red melton cloth for the coats, bayonet scabbards, and other items. In order to ensure quality and authenticity many of the items used have had to be made by members of the group itself. Such labour is undertaken by the membership on a voluntary basis; and the group now has members with expertise in producing belt plates, regimental buttons, wooden canteens (with a branded Board of Ordnance mark), coats, great-coats, trousers, cartridge pouches, buff leather cross-belts, and colours.

The equipment is based on original examples and/or primary sources. Access to the collections of and assistance from experts at the Canadian Parks Service and the Canadian War Museum have enabled the regiment to achieve and maintain a high standard of accuracy. For example, the regimental coats are made from a pattern based on an examination of originals; lace and showing seams are hand sewn, and cutting and construction tech-



*The Canadian Fencibles helped organise the trip by more than 120 North American re-enactors to participate in the 1990 Waterloo commemoration, and provided the largest single unit, alongside drafts from the 37th, 41st and 49th Regiments, the Incorporated Militia, and the 19th Bn. of Dutch Militia. (All photographs, Janice Lang)*



niques of the period have been painstakingly maintained. Lastly, the two regulation sizes of buttons have been reproduced from surviving examples.

Each member of the re-created Canadian Fencibles finances his own uniform and equipment and must meet the standards set out by the organization. The average private incurs the following expenses (in Canadian dollars):

Musket & bayonet.....	600.00
Shako .....	55.00
Coat.....	100.00
Shirt, trousers, stock & gaiters.....	70.00
Pouch & bayonet belts.....	45.00
Cartridge pouch .....	80.00
Bayonet scabbard.....	35.00
Belt plate .....	35.00
Canteen .....	20.00
Haversack .....	5.00

The majority of these prices represent only the cost of the materials, which is a result of another group policy. Group members do not charge each other for labour. As a result, the

costly hobby of re-enactment has become significantly more affordable for the members without sacrificing historical accuracy. For example, each shako is sold at one quarter of its market value.

### DISPLAYS AND COMMEMORATIONS

Besides attention to outfitting, considerable effort goes into ensuring the historical accuracy of the regiment's public presentations. The unit's drill is drawn from a variety of sources; Dundas' *Principles of Military Movements* (1788), *The Manual and Platoon Exercises* (1804), and the *Rules and Regulations for the Manual and Platoon Exercises, Formations, Field-Exercise, and Movements* (1807). In addition, the *Rules and Regulations for the Formation, Exercise and Movements of the Militia of Lower Canada* (Quebec 1812) has also been studied to provide a better understanding of the military drill of the period. Regular drill

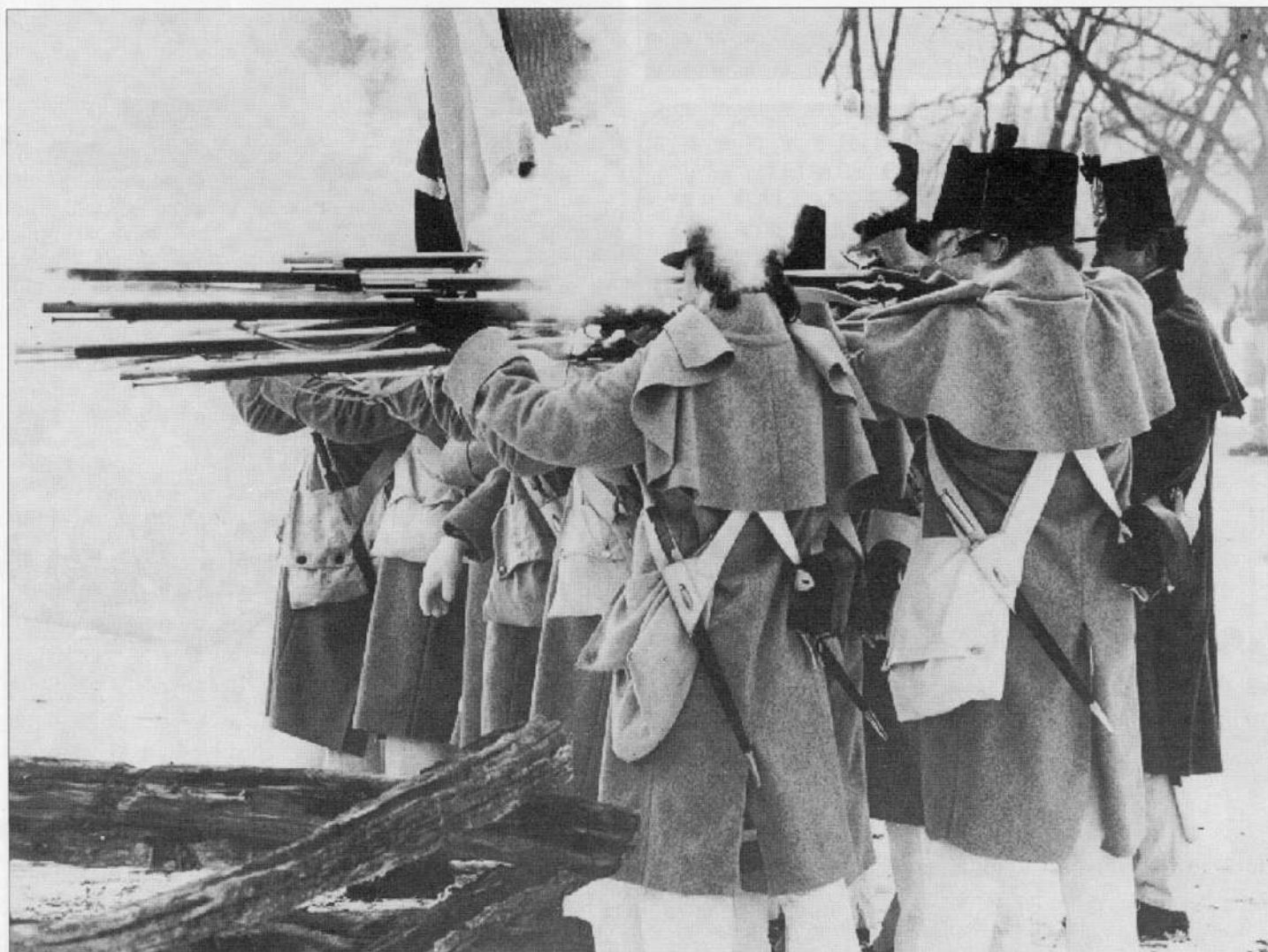
practices are held to maintain the drill standards of regulars of the time, and to educate new recruits. A comprehensive, illustrated manual of the drill of the period has also been produced by one of the members.

In battle re-enactments, some historical accuracy has necessarily been sacrificed in the interest of safety. The group does not use ramrods in opposing-line situations, and limits each cartridge's powder charge to 100 grains. A flash guard and a leather hammer stall (cover) are required for each musket. Liability insurance for the group is provided under a policy issued to the Museum of Applied Military History. Such measures allow the group to enjoy re-enactment events without endangering the safety of its members or the public.

Each year, War of 1812 commemorations are held at a large number of sites in North America including New Orleans, Crysler's Farm, Fort Niagara, Prescott, Fort

Malden, Sackets Harbour, Fort Meigs, and North Point (Baltimore). The Canadian Fencibles participate in a large number of these events, and offer a variety of tactical battle-field displays. The re-enactment of the Battle of Stoney Creek, Ontario, in June demonstrates His Majesty's troops' successful night attack on American positions in 1813. As a unit the Canadian Fencibles brave -25°C temperatures and snow to re-create the February 1813 British and Canadian attack on American fortifications at Ogdensburg, New York. In +30°C temperatures in August, the group commemorates the ill-fated storming of the American garrison at

*Nice rear view of a two-rank line firing a volley in the snow at an Ogdensburg, NY, re-enactment commemorating the action in February 1813. This event can involve temperatures of -25°C. The grey woollen campaign trousers one might expect to see were apparently not issued to the regiment until the following summer.*









**Colour photographs opposite:**

(A) His Grace the Duke of Wellington at the 175th anniversary celebrations of the construction of Fort Wellington at Prescott, Ontario. At this commemoration the Canadian Fencibles provided the honour guard, and demonstrated tactics of the War of 1812. The historical regiment was one of the first units posted to the fort after its construction in 1813.

(B) The Canadian Fencibles in winter dress, about to fire a volley on American positions at the Battle of Ogdensburg.

(C) The Canadian Fencibles march off in column after the 175th anniversary celebrations on the field of Waterloo in June 1990; see 'MI' No.32 for an account of this event. Note the brightness of the polished muskets: accounts mention that the historical regiment habitually polished their arms bright, to the point of weakening several of the barrels — which is unsurprising considering the abrasiveness of the materials used, ebony paper and a mixture of brick-dust and lard. (All photographs, Janice Lang)

Fort Erie, Ontario, in 1814.

In 1990 two members of the Canadian Fencibles undertook to organize a trip for over a hundred and twenty North American re-enactors to Belgium for the 175th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. The Canadian Fencible Regiment was the largest single unit in the North American contingent. Other participating regiments from Canada included the 37th, 41st, and 49th Regiments, the Incorporated Militia, and the 19th Battalion of Dutch Militia.

Perhaps the most distinctive event organized by the Canadian Fencibles is the annual regimental dinner held at the Stockade Barracks in Prescott, Ontario. The Stockade Barracks was garrisoned during the War of 1812 by soldiers like the Canadian Fencibles, and served as a hospital. It is now a museum. For dinner, the building's first-floor barracks room is converted into a candlelit period mess decorated with portraits of King George III, the regiment's colours, and other regimental items. A five-course period meal is first enjoyed by the members. Following the meal, the toasts begin. Initiated with one 'to the King', the toasts continue into the early morning hours.

In addition to drill and battlefield tactics the Canadian Fencibles portray camp life of the War of 1812. Commissariat store returns and accounts during the war show the wide use of five-man square tents by troops in Canada. These tents were left over from the American Revolution and were in poor condition. The bell-shaped Duke of York's pattern, or Flanders tent, introduced into the British army in the 1790s was not supplied to troops in North America until after the war had started. Therefore, since the re-created Canadian Fencibles portray the regiment during the summer of 1812, its members have chosen to use the old-pattern square tents. Because of the way they were issued the original tents were probably not marked regimentally. They may, however, have displayed regimental markings from the previous occupants serving in the American Revolution. In addition to streets of square tents, camp colours, tin and iron kettles on camp fires, and various boxes and baggage all add to the regiment's portrayal of a period encampment.

Without the aid of government or corporate sponsors, the re-created Canadian Fencibles have achieved and maintained very high standards in clothing, equipment, and drill. The group's attention to authenticity and its strict standards have created a very dedicated membership. **MI**

**Acknowledgements**

This series could not have been possible without the assistance of a great many people. A particular note of thanks goes to Janice Lang, whose photographs brought life to the story of the Canadian Regiment. All 30 of the Fencibles must also be thanked for posing for this article, especially when that involved standing in heavy snow for long periods of time. The kind assistance and information given by Paul Fortier was also invaluable. Peter Twist must be commended for permitting the use of his collection, and for his willingness to shave his beard for the photos. Special thanks also to Robert Anglin, Gavin Watt, René Chartrand, John Davison, John Pinkerton, Robert Cook, Robin Morris and Renée Gauthier for their information, comments, and support.

Interested readers may contact the Museum of Applied Military History c/o: R.R.No.1, King City, Ontario, Canada LOG 1K0.



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## GALLERY

# Thomas Tyldesley

STUART REID Painting by CHRISTA HOOK

On 15 July 1642 a Lancashire gentleman pistolled a weaver in a muddy brawl in Manchester at the outset of the English Civil War. Just as it was ending, more than nine years later, he himself was pistolled in an equally obscure skirmish outside Wigan. His career is remarkable not for any particularly dazzling military talent; but as an example of the indefatigable energy, and selfless loyalty to his King's cause, displayed by a fitting representative of his class and time.

Thomas Tyldesley was born on 3 September 1612 into a long-established family of Catholic gentry. He appears to have gone soldiering abroad during his youth, but details are lacking. We know that by 1634 he had returned to Lancashire, where he married Frances Standish, and settled down to the quiet life of a country gentleman. However, great events swept him up from this peaceful destiny; in summer 1642 he joined the Royalist party being organised by Lord Strange, shortly to become the Earl of Derby. On 15 July he took part in an abortive attempt to seize Manchester for the King; heavy rain prevented the soldiers' matchlocks from firing, and the only casualty of the affray was a weaver named Richard Perceval, generally believed to have been pistolled by Tyldesley.

Driven out of Manchester, the Royalists raised such men as they could out of the Trained Bands, together with numbers of Catholic volunteers; and in September returned to Manchester, laying siege to the city for a week. Tyldesley played a prominent part, at one point leading an assault which actually penetrated the town by Deansgate, but this attempt failed in its turn. The Royalist force retired after a week to dry themselves out (the rain had been incessant); and subsequently joined the King's army in its march on London. Tyldesley had press-ganged the

better part of a Trained Band regiment from Amounderness Hundred — the Fylde; and on 22 October at Edgehill he fought as lieutenant colonel to Lord Molyneux, another Lancashire officer. Their regiment does not appear to have distinguished itself; it served in the tertio or infantry brigade of Sir Gilbert Gerard, which is believed to have held back somewhat. Even so Molyneux's major, Henry Byrom, was killed, and a chronicler said of the pressed Trained Band men that 'most of them never returned again'.

### BATTLES OF 1643

Tyldesley soon left Molyneux's regiment and returned to Lancashire, where, over Christmas, he recruited for his own regiments of foot and horse, and even some dragooners. His men got off to a bad start when they were overrun during the unsuccessful defence of Preston on 9 February 1643. Tyldesley himself was absent in Yorkshire, arranging for reinforcements from the Marquis of Newcastle. With these men — some 600 shot and pike — Derby and Tyldesley took Lancaster on 13 March; and, deftly evading a Parliamentary relief force, recaptured Preston the next day by a *coup de main*. While this unexpected setback sent the enemy into headlong retreat, on 20 April Tyldesley was ambushed at Whalley Ridge, near Pendle, by





*Engraving after a portrait now in Tyldesley Town Hall, for Baines's History of Lancashire. The senior officer's baton suggests that it was painted after 1644, and the town in the obligatory background battle scene may represent Burton on Trent, where he won his knighthood. (Wigan Leisure Services)*

one Col. Shuttleworth. Although he himself had a remarkable escape, untouched by a ditchful of musketeers firing at point blank range, the flight of his men over the hill threw the rest of Derby's force into confusion and a rout ensued. Furious recriminations followed this affair.

While Derby retired to the safety of the Isle of Man, Tyldesley rallied two regiments of foot (his own and Sir John Girlington's, totalling some 700 men) and nine troops of horse, and crossed the Penines to join Newcastle's army. Subsequently they were assigned to a small field army formed under Gen. Cavendish to escort the Queen and a vital ammunition convoy from York to Oxford. An enemy garrison blocked their way at Burton on Trent, and refused their summons; it was resolved to storm the town, and on 2 July 1643, while the foot stormed across the fords, Tyldesley earned himself a knighthood by charging at the head of his regiment of horse across a narrow bridge of no less than 36 arches and into the town. The ceremony itself was probably performed on Edgehill on 13 July when the King came out of Oxford to greet the Queen.

On arriving at Oxford, the infantry of the little army were reclothed, according to the

diarist Anthony A'Wood — some in red coats, breeches and peaked montero caps, and some in blue; there is some later circumstantial evidence that Tyldesley's men were issued red uniforms. While the foot rested in the city for a week Sir Thomas and his horse rode for Bristol on 18 July; and were present with Charles Gerard's brigade when that city was stormed on the 26th. He was re-united with his foot regiment (now part of Col. Conyers Darcy's Tertio) at the siege of Gloucester; and after it was raised by the Earl of Essex, fought at First Newbury on 20 September. Tyldesley appears to have led his cavalry in person, on the left wing, but little is known of the deployment of his infantry — though at least one of three captains killed while serving under him there belonged to the foot, so they were not idle.

While quartered in Hampshire after the battle both regiments absorbed remnants of smaller units originally raised in Lancashire — one of these being the now much reduced Lord Molyneux's Regiment.

#### THE 1644 CAMPAIGNS

Instead of going into winter quarters at Oxford Sir Thomas led his reinforced regiments north to join the army which Lord Byron was forming in Cheshire and North Wales. He spent Christmas at Birkenhead, amusing himself firing cannon over the Mersey at the Parliamentarians in Liverpool; but January saw the unsuccessful siege of Nantwich, and Tyldesley's Horse at least was present at the battle there on 25 January which ended in a crushing Royalist defeat.

Sir Thomas spent the rest of

the winter at Hawarden Castle, occasionally raiding into Lancashire; but at the end of May he joined Prince Rupert's army which came sweeping up from Shrewsbury with the eventual aim of relieving York, besieged by the Earl of Leven's Anglo-Scots force.

On 28 May Sir Thomas and the Earl of Derby took prominent parts in the storming of Bolton, and the massacre which followed: Bolton had long been known as 'the Geneva of the North' for its Puritan sympathies, and the mainly Irish and Catholic stormers were merciless. Liverpool also fell on the 12th, stormed by a 'red regiment' which seems to have been Tyldesley's.

With most of the county temporarily under Royalist control Tyldesley took the opportunity to recruit his regiments. At Marston Moor on 2 July 1644 his infantry was sufficiently strong to form two battalions on the right of the front line. His was presumably the 'red regiment' involved in a skirmish that afternoon in which one of his officers, Capt. Thomas Houghton, was killed. Tyldesley's Horse fought well on the right in Molyneux's Brigade, and his lieutenant colonel, a Durham man named Thomas Salvin, was killed there together with at least two troop commanders. Tyldesley himself appears to have been serving as a major general, presumably as senior officer in command of the Royalist front line infantry. (The late Brig. Peter Young suggested that Col. Robert Broughton may have commanded here; but Tyldesley was senior to him, and a much likelier candidate, and a later contemporary reference strongly suggests the appointment.) By the end of the battle the Royalists had been utterly defeated, and the next day Rupert's men began their retreat to Lancashire.

#### Defeat and capture

On 18 August Sir John Meldrum attacked what was left of the Royalist forces in the area, now under Lord Goring, at Freckleton Marsh south of Preston. The only Royalist infantry present were Tyldesley's Foot, sadly depleted

and without ammunition since Marston Moor. Attacked by Col. John Booth's Regiment they fled at once, quickly followed by the cavalry. Some of the infantry managed to throw themselves into the new Royalist garrison of Liverpool, where they held out under Sir Robert Byron until 1 November; but Tyldesley and the cavalry rode south to Chester. On 18 September Sir Thomas was captured in battle at Montgomery in the Welsh Marches. Although Sir John Meldrum offered to have him exchanged, the horrified Lancashire Parliamentarians at once vetoed the suggestion; and he remained a captive for nearly a year, at first in Eccleshall Castle, before making his escape from Stafford Castle in late 1645.

This proved to be well-timed: the Royalist governor of Lichfield had fallen under suspicion, and Tyldesley, appointed commander in chief of all Royalist horse in Staffordshire, supplanted him early in 1646. Besieged by Sir William Brereton, Tyldesley held Lichfield Cathedral and its close — a substantial fortress — until 10 July 1646; and even then he surrendered only in response to a direct order from his King, now himself held prisoner by the Scots. Sir Thomas sailed for Ireland; but, falling out with the Irish Royalists, he retired to the Isle of Man, where he was reconciled with his old commander Derby.

#### THE SECOND CIVIL WAR

At the outbreak of war in 1648 Sir Thomas again succeeded in raising a regiment of foot, together with at least one troop of horse, in north-west Lancashire. He was besieging Lancaster Castle when the Marquis of Hamilton's Scots, now allied to the King, were defeated by Cromwell at Preston on 17 August. Sir Thomas rode at once to intercept the Scots Maj. Gen. George Monro, then moving south with reinforcements, and proposed that they join forces to fall on Cromwell's rear, since they still outnumbered the



Parliamentarians. *Monro* — a veteran of Swedish service and more recently of the war in Ireland — refused, and retired to Scotland; he was probably unwilling to co-operate with such a notorious Catholic. Barred on this account from taking refuge there themselves, *Tyldesley* and his men, with the other surviving northern Royalists, surrendered on good terms at *Appleby* on 9 October.

Banished from the kingdom, the irreconcilable *Sir Thomas* rejoined *Derby* on the *Isle of Man* — and prepared for yet another uprising... In late summer of 1650 he visited *Charles II* in Scotland, narrowly avoiding arrest. On 6 August 1651 another Scots army crossed the border and moved swiftly southwards — so swiftly that *Tyldesley* and *Derby*, delayed by contrary winds, missed their rendezvous, landing at *Skippool* on *Wyre Water* on 15 August. They had only 60 horse and 250 *Manx* foot; so while *Derby* rode after the King, *Tyldesley* was left behind to recruit from the still solidly

Royalist *Fylde* country. Aided by officers who had served under him before, or by their sons (his own son *Edward* served as a cornet in his regiment) he was not unsuccessful; and caught up with *Derby* at

*Warrington* on the 17th, to spend another week recruiting.

On 25 August 1651 *Tyldesley's* force was completely defeated by a regular regiment of horse and some militia under the Parliamentary Col. *Robert Lilburne* (brother of the Leveller politician, *John*). The engagement that afternoon at *Wigan Lane* was a rather straightforward affair, with the horse of both sides drawn up in the broad lane and the foot lining the hedges. The Royalist cavalry were at first successful, and twice drove *Lilburne's* men back; but at the third charge they were overthrown, and as they broke *Tyldesley's* horse was shot from under him by a musketeer lurking in the bushes. Kicking himself free, he tried either to make his way out of the lane or to mount a loose horse, only to be pistolled by an unknown trooper. At least three of *Sir Thomas's* officers died with him: his lieutenant colonel, *James Anderton*; his adjutant, *William Ilsley*; and a Protestant officer, *Capt. John Bamber*, who had served with him ever since 1642.

*Tyldesley's* infantry lasted a little longer. The reluctant *Manxmen* had run off with the scattered Royalist cavalry, but *Tyldesley's* own men remained, standing grimly by the

roadside near where their colonel had fallen. At first they beat off *Lilburne's* troopers, killing many of their mounts with pikes. At last *Lilburne* brought up some militia foot led by a *Capt. Jollie*; and, according to local tradition, as resistance finally dwindled he cried out to them to give no quarter. Just over a week later the English Civil Wars ended at *Worcester* on 3 September 1651.

Nearly 30 years later one of *Tyldesley's* old officers, *Cornet Alexander Rigby*, erected a monument to him by the roadside in *Wigan*. Curiously resembling a stone gatepost, it still stands there, bearing this inscription:

AN HIGH ACT TO GRATITUDE  
ERECTED THIS MONUMENT,  
WHICH CONVEYS THE MEMORY  
OF *SIR THOMAS TYLDESLEY* TO  
POSTERITY. WHO SERVED KING  
*CHARLES THE FIRST* AS LIEUTENANT COLONEL AT *EDGEHILL BATTLE*, AFTER RAISING REGIMENTS OF HORSE FOOT AND DRAGOONS. AND FOR THE DESPERATE STORMING OF *BURTON UPON TRENT* (2 JULY 1643) OVER A BRIDGE OF 36 ARCHES, RECEIVED THE HONOUR OF KNIGHTHOOD. HE AFTERWARDS SERVED IN ALL THE WAR IN GREAT COMMAND: WAS GOVERNOR OF *LICHFIELD*: AND FOLLOWED THE FORTUNE OF THE CROWN THROUGH THE THREE KINGDOMS: AND NEVER COMPOUNDED WITH THE REBELS THOUGH STRONGLY INVITED. AND ON THE 25TH OF AUGUST 1651 WAS HERE SLAIN COMMANDING AS MAJOR GENERAL UNDER THE EARL OF *DERBY*. TO WHOME THE GRATEFUL ERECTOR, *ALEXANDER RIGBY ESQ* WAS CORNET. AND WHEN HE WAS HIGH SHERIFF OF THIS COUNTY AD 1679, PLACED THIS HIGH OBLIGATION ON THE WHOLE FAMILY OF THE *TYLDESLEYS*.

*Tyldesley* has also been more recently commemorated by the re-enactors of the English Civil

*Tyldesley's* standard: this green cornet with a gold device and green/gold fringing has been reconstructed from a 1715 description. In that year *Tyldesley's* grandson *Edward* joined the *Jacobites* with a troop of horse, marching behind *Sir Thomas's* old cornet. Despite clear evidence of guilt he was acquitted in the subsequent trial after bribing the jury.

**Christa Hook's reconstruction on the rear cover** is based upon the portrait currently in *Tyldesley Town Hall*, and depicts an incident which occurred on 9 January 1646. With three troops of horse, *Tyldesley* encountered *Capt. Stone*, the Parliamentary governor of *Stafford*, near *Cannock*; and after an initial success was defeated. At one point *Sir Thomas* was unhorsed; hotly pursued, he ran through a house and mounted a stray horse which he found at the rear. He lost his hat and cloak which, with his horse, were carried off to *Stafford* in triumph by *Stone's* men.

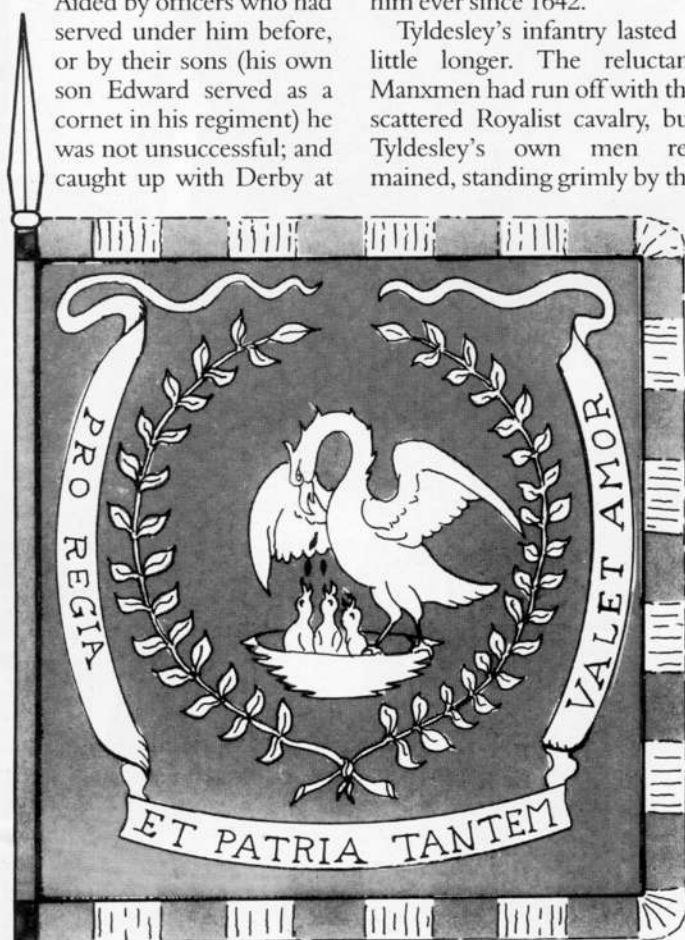
*Sir Thomas* wears the customary sleeved buff leather coat, turned up at the cuffs to reveal a pale blue silk lining (see 'MI' No.21 for an extensive discussion of a similar coat worn by *Gustavus Adolphus* at *Lützen*). Although providing some protection the buff coat was primarily a weather-proof campaign garment, and having been cured with fish oil was virtually waterproof. This treatment also ensures that even relatively thick leather remains surprisingly supple — a point to which the author can attest.

Over the buff coat he wears a blackened steel corselet and an external gorget, and on his left arm a steel bridle gauntlet. He was evidently not wearing or carrying a helmet on 9 January; and although it was common to include a helmet as a 'prop' in portraits, one does not appear in *Tyldesley's* painting. This may perhaps suggest that he was not in the habit of wearing one, and may have preferred a secrete or steel skull cap under his hat.

Around his waist is the usual rose-red 'scarf' worn by most Royalist officers, especially those associated with the *Oxford* army. It was customary for the scarf to be wound around the waist when worn in conjunction with armour, but otherwise it was normally worn from shoulder to hip. His breeches are shown as dark greyish green with four lines of gold lace up the side seams; his boots are the conventional heavy riding type with large spur-leathers. The sword illustrated is an English rapier with a 'Cavalier' hilt, popular amongst officers though felt by many to be less than useful as a cavalryman's weapon.

*War Society*. *Sir Thomas Tyldesley's* Regiment of Foot has been recreated by members of the society's *King's Army* as representing the many northern units which served the King, and it is pleasant to relate that some of them actually come from the *Fylde* country. Oddly enough, it is not infrequently brigaded with the recreated *Sir Thomas Blackwell's* Regiment, which fought alongside the original regiment in *Conyers Darcy's Tertio* in 1643.

MI



SAR91



**Thomas Tyldesley,  
Cannock, January 1646**

